

Old Wounds

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SLAM IN:

INT. INFIRMARY - BATTIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

VARRO'S DEAD BODY lies on a table. Splattered with dried blood. His FATAL WOUND an angry accusation. REVERSE TO FIND

SPARTACUS

standing at the foot of the table. The pain and guilt over his part in ending Varro's life cloud his eyes. Sleep has obviously evaded him. His knuckles are raw and cracked, and he bears the scrapes and shallow cuts from his "exhibition" match in episode 110. PUSH IN ON SPARTACUS as he flashes to snippets of

HIS FIGHT WITH VARRO (ALREADY SHOT)

at the party for the Magistrate's son Numerius from episode 110. Blows are exchanged. Varro inflicts a shallow cut across Spartacus' lower right side. Spartacus counters, defeating Varro. NUMERIUS gives the thumbs down. Spartacus plunges his sword down into Varro's chest, wrenching Spartacus back to the present.

DOCTORE (O.S.)

It is never an easy thing.

DOCTORE appears. Spartacus' eyes remain fixed on Varro.

DOCTORE

To see a friend once loved, now
absent breath.

SPARTACUS

He should yet walk. With that
foolish grin, and dreams of a life
beyond these walls.

DOCTORE

Every night breaks. And we must all
wake.

Spartacus grimaces, his hand dropping to the shallow wound on his lower right side, inflicted by Varro.

SPARTACUS

I would the gods turn back the
sun... and set me in his place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

He fought with honor. As did you both.

SPARTACUS

(disgusted)

His heart was stilled for a boy's amusement. Where is the honor in that?

DOCTORE

Varro left this world a gladiator. And shall be remembered as such.

SPARTACUS

No. He will be remembered as a husband. A father. And a friend among enemies.

SMASH CUT TO:

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

TIGHT ON CRIXUS as he spars with another MAN. He pauses, glancing over at

SPARTACUS

carrying a litter burdened with Varro's body. Helping him as pallbearers are HAMILCAR, RHASKOS, and an ND GLADIATOR. Doctore leads them.

THE OTHER GLADIATORS

in the training square pause to pay their respects. DURO and AGRON trade a somber look.

VARRO'S BODY

is carried to the gate where his wife AURELIA and young son JANUS await. Varro's body is loaded onto the back of a cart. Doctore nods to Aurelia. He and the other men then return to the square. Spartacus lingers, attempting to find words to express his sorrow.

SPARTACUS

Aurelia --

She tears her shell-shocked gaze from her husband's face to meet Spartacus' eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURELIA
Is it true? That he perished by
your sword?

Face wracked with anguish, Spartacus nods. Tears spill down Aurelia's face.

AURELIA (cont'd)
He loved you as a brother.

Spartacus can muster no response. As Aurelia turns away,
ANGLE UP TO --

THE BALCONY

LUCRETIA and BATIATUS gaze down at the proceedings. NAEVIA attends in the background.

LUCRETIA
Spartacus will not take this loss
well.

BATIATUS
And who's to fucking blame him?

Batiatus turns, angrily exits into --

INT. TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - CONTINUOUS

Batiatus barely contains his wrath.

BATIATUS
Calavius slaughters my stock at the
whim of his maggot, then shits upon
my ambitions, mocking me in my own
house. No, a loss not to be taken
fucking well. But one that shall be
directly answered in kind.

Lucretia waves Naevia out, not wanting her to overhear.

LUCRETIA
(hushed)
He is the Magistrate. To move
against him...

BATIATUS
He is but a man. And all men fall,
beneath the heel of their hubris.

LUCRETIA
Quintus --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

Turn thought toward other matters.
What of Ilithyia? Has she moved to
secure us her husband's patronage?

LUCRETIA

She has departed to meet Glaber in
Rome.

BATIATUS

Welcome news. The support of a
Legatus should be more than enough
to gain political office. I only
regret Calavius will not live to
see the "unworthy" name of Batiatus
so elevated.

LUCRETIA

You play a perilous game. The very
thought of discovery...

(swallows)

It turns the stomach.

AULUS appears across the room. His face and cloak are
splattered with BLOOD.

BATIATUS

Make it a thing of iron, and see it
settled.

He crosses to Aulus for private consultation. Lucretia
watches, tensing with worry.

ON BATIATUS AND AULUS,

well out of earshot of any SLAVES.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

What news? Speak, and caress the
ear with words.

AULUS

You will find them soft and
pleasing. We set upon the
Magistrate on the road leaving the
city.

BATIATUS

Guards and wagon?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AULUS

Attended to as instructed. The man himself removed to the appointed place.

BATIATUS

Ashur...?

AULUS

Standing watch. I will relieve him by cover of night.

BATIATUS

I shall accompany. I would gaze into the man's eyes, and see the power of my reflection in them. Avail yourself of my hospitality until such a time. Wine, women...

AULUS

Both would suit me.

BATIATUS

(chuckles)
And so deserved.

AULUS

(bowing slightly)
Dominus.

Aulus moves off. Batiatus watches him go, a dark smile bending his lips. Lucretia approaches.

LUCRETIA

It is done, then?

BATIATUS

No. It has only just begun.

OFF the ominous statement...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

SWORDS CLASH. The day's training is in full swing. Agron trades blows with Spartacus. The champion is distracted and unusually winded. His moves sloppy.

CRIXUS

glares at the lackluster display from across the square as he hacks at a training palus. He grunts his disapproval to Doctore nearby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS

Behold, the mighty Champion of
Capua.

DOCTORE

A heavy heart weighs a man's sword.

Spartacus breaks off from sparring with Agron. He crosses to the water barrel, out of breath.

CRIXUS

The loss of a brother is felt by every gladiator. We honor him not with tears, but with blood spilled in the arena.

DOCTORE

Spoken as a true champion.

CRIXUS

The games against Pompeii approach. Years I have been robbed of the primus by Solonius and his bribes. Finally it is secured by our Dominus, and who fights? Spartacus. The woman who grieves.

BACK ON SPARTACUS

as he drinks his water, sweat dripping from his increasingly pallid skin. HECTOR appears, the burns on his face (from his run-in with Spartacus in episode 110) still red and inflamed. He glares, hating Spartacus almost as much as Crixus.

HECTOR

Spartacus. You are summoned.

Spartacus follows Hector out of the square, WIPING US TO --

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Batiatus stands by the pool, considering the statue of himself. Hector escorts a sweating Spartacus in. Batiatus does not immediately turn.

BATIATUS

Is that truly my likeness? Have so many years passed, that marble must be etched with such lines?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

Would that every good man lived to
see his face so marred.

BATIATUS

And the wretched pass smooth of
skin.

(turns)

Varro's death has been foremost in
my thoughts. It seizes the breast
to lose a gladiator of his
standing.

SPARTACUS

The comparison is false, to a son
losing his father. A wife, her
husband.

BATIATUS

A burden, to be sure. Yet the risk
was known to him, and accepted of
free will.

SPARTACUS

As a gladiator. Not a child's
plaything.

Batiatus sees the storm brewing within Spartacus. He nods in
agreement, seeking to abate it.

BATIATUS

The Magistrate and his whelp caused
us both grievance. It will not go
unanswered, I promise you.

Spartacus picks up on the threat. His eyes blaze with
vengeance.

SPARTACUS

I would be of service towards the
deed.

BATIATUS

(shakes head)

Take comfort in knowing its intent.
I would have your focus turned
toward the games against Pompeii.
That perfumed shit Solonius always
secured the Primus by inserting
tongue in ass, only to be crushed
by our city's hated rival. But this
year he falls out of favor. This
year the House of Batiatus secures

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (cont'd)
the honor! Spartacus, Bringer of
Rain, to face Pericles, Titan of
Pompeii!

SPARTACUS
It is to be Sine Missione?

BATIATUS
No quarter given, no mercy shown.

SPARTACUS
And the purse?

BATIATUS
On equal footing to the match
itself.

SPARTACUS
I would see it paid to Varro's
wife.

BATIATUS
(surprised)
The sum is substantial. You would
see it all part from your fingers?

SPARTACUS
Along with future winnings I claim
in the arena.

BATIATUS
A noble gesture.
(considering)
One I shall see matched.

Now it's Spartacus' turn to be surprised.

SPARTACUS
You would do this? For Varro?

BATIATUS
I do this for you, Spartacus. That
you would have peace of mind,
knowing his family is attended to.

Batiatus eyes Spartacus' less than stellar condition.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
These sad events have obviously
taken toll. Rest, and be reassured
that those responsible for our pain
shall soon drink deep of their own.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFF BATIATUS, ever the master manipulator...

INT. BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Hector escorts Spartacus back to the ludus. A silent beat, broken by Hector.

HECTOR

It is regretful, what happened to Varro. I saw in your eyes how you craved to defy order of his death.

Spartacus doesn't respond. Hector's eyes flash with hatred.

HECTOR (cont'd)

A shame you did not attempt it.

Spartacus darkens, but as they round a corner his attention is drawn to

A CHAMBER

where a naked Aulus is being plied with oils by two SLAVE GIRLS. RAMP UP TO SLOW MOTION AS WE PASS. Slave Girl #1 is topless, standing behind Aulus, her hands sensually caressing the villain's flesh. SLAVE GIRL #2 (clothed) sinks to her knees in front of Aulus, her hand stroking

THE SMOOTH, UNBROKEN SKIN

OF HIS RIGHT SIDE (NO SCARS). She glances up as Spartacus passes -- it's MIRA. Her eyes flash with shame. Spartacus takes in the sight, numb to it as his passing WIPES US TO --

INT. BATH - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

BEDLAM ensues as the Gladiators fight to get a look at the list of matchups for the upcoming games (similar to scene 13 in Episode 103). Duro grabs the parchment from a man's hand. Disgusted by what he reads.

DURO

Goat-fuck! I knew it!

Agron snatches it from him, scans it, grins.

AGRON

Why do you fucking bleat? You fight at my side, brother!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DURO

Like a suckling babe. I would prove myself alone.

Crixus snatches the list from Agron.

CRIXUS

And die the same.

Duro glares, moving off with Agron. Crixus eyes the list. His face falls as he realizes he isn't on it. He angrily thrusts the list at Rhaskos. Rhaskos scans it with a frown, showing it to Hamilcar.

RHASKOS

What do the markings say?

HAMILCAR

(reading)

That you are fucked.

They pass Spartacus, who is looking very much the worse for wear. Sweat beads his skin as a SLAVE scrapes him down.

AGRON

eyes him as he begins oiling and scraping (being a lower man, no slaves attend him).

AGRON

Our Champion does not look to form.

DURO

The gods punish him.

AGRON

For what offense?

DURO

You fucking jest. Varro's blood, still wet upon his hands?

AGRON

His hands were removed from choice. If he had not done as commanded --

DURO

Fucking reason and argument. I would die before I would kill my own brother --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS
(loud and angry)
And who would see to your brother's
family?

Spartacus' voice booms as he rises, sweat coursing down his pale skin. The bath goes quiet as he gets in Duro's face, pissed and wild-eyed. Crixus watches with fixed interest.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
What answer do you give, Duro? With
both of you dead, who would see to
his wife?! His fucking child?!

Duro stammers, confused.

DURO
My brother has no wife or child.

But Spartacus isn't listening anymore. His heart seizes in his chest as he spots

DEAD VARRO

gazing at him sadly from the bath's entrance. Splattered in blood. His fatal wound still fresh and weeping. He turns and exits.

SPARTACUS
Wait... Wait!

Spartacus starts after him, shoving others out of the way as he exits. Crixus laughs, calling out to the men.

CRIXUS
Fucking Thracians.

Muted chuckles. OFF CRIXUS, wondering if Spartacus' instability offers opportunity...

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus moves through the corridors in SLOW MOTION. He catches maddening glimpses of Dead Varro as he pushes his way past men gambling and laughing. He rushes after him, bursting outside into --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus slows to a stop out on the sand. Confusion creases his face as we reveal the TRAINING SQUARE IS EMPTY. Spartacus blinks the sweat from his eyes, not comprehending.

A HAND

touches his shoulder, startling him. He whirls around to find Mira has appeared behind him, her escort GUARD lingering nearby. She regards Spartacus with concern.

MIRA
Apologies. I called your name...

SPARTACUS
(absently)
I did not hear.

She notes his pale features, his red-rimmed eyes.

MIRA
You do not appear yourself.

SPARTACUS
(ignoring that)
Did Dominus send you?

MIRA
(nods)
He would see your spirits raised.

SPARTACUS
They do not deserve it.

MIRA
Spartacus --

He starts to turn away. Her hand reaches out to stop him, accidentally grazing the wound on his side. He winces in pain.

MIRA (cont'd)
Your wound...

SPARTACUS
A scratch. Varro suffered worse.

MIRA
I will help you to your cell.

SPARTACUS
You are not needed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRA
(sting)
Apologies.

She turns to go.

SPARTACUS
Mira.

She stops, hopeful.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
The man I saw you with...

She flushes with shame, launching into explanation.

MIRA
I was ordered to tend to his needs.
He means nothing to me.

SPARTACUS
Such is not my concern. The man was
wounded trying to protect my wife.
Next you lie with him, I would have
you offer my gratitude.

Spartacus then turns and heads for his cell. Mira watches him go, longing for a spark of jealousy or desire from the champion. As Spartacus closes the cell door shut, SMASH CUT TO --

INT. CISTERN - CHAMBER - NIGHT

TIGHT ON A SACK, as it is lifted from MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS' head. He blinks, face battered, eyes adjusting to the light. Batiatus looms over him. Aulus and ASHUR lurk in the background.

MAGISTRATE
(shocked)
Batiatus...

BATIATUS
Apologies for the accommodations,
Magistrate. Take comfort that you
will not be required to endure them
long.

MAGISTRATE
What is this madness?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He tries to move, realizes that he is tied to a moldy old chair.

BATIATUS

Madness? No. Only reason, born of a clear mind and wounded heart.

MAGISTRATE

Wounded? I have done you no injury.

BATIATUS

(to Ashur and Aulus)
The man's own crimes escape his lofty notice.

The Magistrate struggles to free himself.

MAGISTRATE

Release me!

BATIATUS

I intend to. From this fucking world.

Fear flashes across the Magistrate's eyes. He swallows hard.

MAGISTRATE

Whatever your disagreement, let us discuss it as civilized men.

BATIATUS

You mistake me. I am but a base animal. A beast to be ridden and disregarded.

MAGISTRATE

Batiatus --

BATIATUS

(to Magistrate)
You accept my hospitality. Enter my home. Break bread and drink my wine. Only to spit in my face.
(quotes in a pompous voice)
"Leave politics to the men with breeding for it."

The Magistrate registers what this is all about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGISTRATE

Offense was not my intent. I sought only to spare you from further humiliation --

BATIATUS

Spare me?!

Batiatus snarls, kicking the chair back. The Magistrate lands hard on the ground with a grunt.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

You have power to spare fucking shit, you pathetic cunt!

Batiatus grinds his heel against the Magistrate's neck, trembling with fury.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Now speak the fucking words! Tell me of my heritage! Tell me my fucking family name bears no weight among you and your noble cock eaters! Speak!

The Magistrate gasps for air under Batiatus' foot. Ashur looks on with a concerned expression.

ASHUR

Apologies, Dominus. Perhaps if you removed your foot...?

Batiatus glares, removes his foot from the Magistrate's neck. He gestures to Ashur and Aulus to right the chair. The Magistrate coughs and sputters. He locks eyes with Batiatus, defiance flaring.

MAGISTRATE

You wish words from me? Then hear them well. You are a jest. A man tolerated, because of your ownership of Spartacus, savior of Capua. When he falls, you shall quickly follow.

Batiatus tries to laugh that off, but the Magistrate's words pierce his deepest fears.

BATIATUS

Tied to a fucking chair in the filth and mire, and the man yet provokes!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGISTRATE

You still do not see it, do you, good Batiatus? You are beneath me. And so you shall remain, in this life or the next. Do what you must to balm your wounded pride. I shall not beg.

BATIATUS

Beg? The time for begging is long past, Magistrate. No. Plans have been set in motion. For you... and young Numerius.

MAGISTRATE

(tensing)

What does my boy have to do with this?

BATIATUS

(grins)

He is a man now. And he too has a part to play in our little drama.

The Magistrate starts to protest, but Batiatus tugs the sack down over his head. The Magistrate thrashes, his muffled screams echoing.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

(to Aulus)

Attend he does not injure himself. I would have him fresh until the appointed time.

Batiatus heads out with a worried Ashur in tow.

ASHUR

Is this wise, Dominus? Perhaps it would be best to --

Batiatus flares.

BATIATUS

We are committed. Take hold of your cock and follow the fucking plan.

Batiatus brusquely exits. Ashur tosses a final worried look to the Magistrate before he follows, WIPING US TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Doctore CRACKS his whip, shouting to the men as they train.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

The games approach! Prove yourselves against Pompeii, and honor the House of Batiatus!

Crixus fumes as he works the palus with his sword. He shoots a venomous look over to --

SPARTACUS

who spars with Agron. Spartacus' condition has worsened. Sweat drips off him. Breaths come in ragged gasps.

AGRON

My brother... meant nothing by his remarks.

SPARTACUS

He spoke his mind. Thoughts... shared by many.

Spartacus steps back, winded, half doubled over to catch his breath.

AGRON

You wish to rest?

SPARTACUS

(hardening)
If I do, I shall tell you.

Spartacus attacks. Agron is forced back, but Spartacus quickly tires. Agron counters, his wooden sword accidentally landing a blow against Spartacus' wounded side. Spartacus staggers back, agony shocking through him.

DEAD VARRO (O.S.)

Did I hurt you...

Startled, Spartacus looks up and sees Dead Varro standing in Agron's place, practice sword in hand.

DEAD VARRO

... Champion?

Spartacus blinks the sweat from his eyes. Now it is Agron facing him. With a FERAL GROWL, Spartacus attacks with a wild frenzy. Each time their swords clash,

DEAD VARRO BRIEFLY FLASHES INTO EXISTENCE,

taking Agron's place. Spartacus and Agron smash together, locking swords. As Spartacus draws close, Agron is replaced

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

by Dead Varro. Spartacus stares into his dead friend's eyes, devastated by the sight. Dead Varro smiles mirthlessly, blood leaking from his mouth.

DEAD VARRO (cont'd)
Tend to the wound.

DOCTORE
Spartacus!

Spartacus glances over to Doctore, joined by Crixus.

CRIXUS
Does he intend to fight, or kiss
the man?

The other men laugh. Spartacus turns back to find Dead Varro gone. Agron stands in his place, concern constricting his face as he looks down at Spartacus' wound.

AGRON
Spartacus...

Spartacus gazes down. BLACK BLOOD streaked with PUS streams down his leg from the wound in his side. He shoves Agron back and starts to walk away, favoring his side. He only makes it a few steps before his eyes unfocus and his legs give out. As he hits the ground, SMASH TO --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

ON SPARTACUS, unconscious, MEDICUS applying a poultice to the wound. Batiatus rails to Doctore.

BATIATUS
The man is half dead! You did not
notice he needed fucking
attention?!

DOCTORE
I thought him only distracted by
Varro's death.

BATIATUS
(to Medicus)
Will he be able to fight against
Pompeii?

MEDICUS
He burns with fever. Miracle if he
lives to the games.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Batiatus constricts, the Magistrate's words of warning echoing in his mind.

BATIATUS

Provide a list of what is needed. Ashur heads to market, and will see it filled. Let not a moment pass with Spartacus unattended. Fetch Mira from the Villa if you need assistance. He has some feelings towards the girl. Her touch may aid in his recovery. Our champion cannot fall.

Batiatus sweeps out into --

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' LUDUS - CONTINUOUS

Doctore follows Batiatus.

BATIATUS

The Primus against Pompeii finally mine and the gods jam cock in ass! The crowd will turn upon me when they learn Spartacus does not fight!

DOCTORE

Perhaps they will be appeased by suitable replacement.

BATIATUS

(scoffs)
Who but Spartacus could best their fucking champion?

DOCTORE

There is but one...

OFF the proclamation...

INT. PANTRY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON NAEVIA, half hidden by the shadows, reacting in surprise.

NAEVIA

The primus?

WIDEN TO REVEAL Crixus in the pantry with her, flush with excitement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS

Mine! Batiatus at last remembers my worth. I shall take the sand again. And see it turn red with the blood of Pericles!

Naevia glances out beyond the gate, worried Crixus will be heard.

NAEVIA

You must soften your words. We will be discovered.

CRIXUS

Let them discover us. Tonight, I am a god! And I will reclaim my title as Champion of Capua...

He pulls her into a kiss. He breaks off, sensing something is wrong.

CRIXUS (cont'd)

The news does not please you.

NAEVIA

It fills my heart with joy, to see you so alive.

(a beat)

And would have you remain so.

CRIXUS

Naevia --

NAEVIA

The Primus is a fight to the death. You have been absent the arena for many months. If Pericles --

CRIXUS

He will not.

NAEVIA

How can you be certain?

He takes her in with a reassuring smile, filled with love and desire.

CRIXUS

Because I will never leave your side. Death itself will tremble if it attempts to part us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tears fill her eyes. He is her heart, and the beating of it fills her with strength and hope.

CRIXUS (cont'd)
 Tomorrow when I claim victory, I
 will look to you in the pulvinus.
 The moment shall be ours alone.

Crixus pulls Naevia into a kiss. She responds, melting into him. He slips off her dress, the fall of the fabric WIPING US TO --

EXT. MARKETPLACE - CAPUA - NIGHT

TIGHT ON A SMALL PURSE OF COINS being dropped into a hand. POP WIDE to reveal SOLONIUS half in the shadows, paying Ashur his weekly bribe. Ashur's hood is pulled up to conceal his face from prying eyes.

SOLONIUS
 Your hand is weighted. Now float
 your tongue.

ASHUR
 You are safe. My master has greater
 concerns requiring his attentions.

Solonius smiles, hoping for the worst.

SOLONIUS
 What plagues good Batiatus to such
 distraction?

ASHUR
 Matters beyond your worries.

SOLONIUS
 Yet they clearly trouble you.
 Confide, and lift your burden.

Ashur hesitates, gives in to the temptation.

ASHUR
 He has grown reckless. His thirst
 for power and vengeance clouds
 judgement.

SOLONIUS
 How so?

Ashur realizes he has said too much already.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR

I have taken too great a risk meeting with you this night. I must to the apothecary, before I am overdue.

Ashur starts off. Solonius takes his arm, halting him.

SOLONIUS

One day, very soon, the House of Batiatus will come crashing down. Do not find yourself buried in the rubble.

Solonius disappears into the night. OFF ASHUR, the warning striking a deep cord...

OMITTED

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus violently convulses, unconscious, the fever consuming him. Medicus tries to force a cup of LIQUID down his throat, but Spartacus is thrashing too much.

MEDICUS

Fucking hold him down!

Mira drops a compress, rushes over to assist. Medicus pours his concoction into Spartacus' mouth. Spartacus sputters and chokes, begins to calm. SLOW PUSH IN ON SPARTACUS' FACE. His eyes suddenly SNAP OPEN. PULL BACK to reveal we are now --

INT. BATH - BATIATUS' LUDUS - CONTINUOUS

A DOZEN or so GLADIATORS scrape down after a long day of training. Crixus sneers at Spartacus in contempt.

CRIXUS

Lick my hole. The pig-fucker's still alive.

Duro, Agron and the other men chuckle. An ATTENDING SLAVE oils Spartacus and begins to scrape him. The Slave brushes Spartacus' wound. Spartacus grimaces, glancing down to see

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE SKIN SURROUNDING HIS WOUND

curling up at the edges. He gingerly peels the inflamed flesh back, revealing a glimmer of GOLD within the wound. SPARTACUS'

eyes widen in dawning horror as he opens the wound further and GOLD COINS drop from within it. The coins strike the ground, the sound huge in the stone room. The men LAUGH. Spartacus looks up, shocked to see

CRIXUS

as a Slave scrapes his chest, the skin peeling back to reveal SOLID GOLD below its surface. Crixus flashes a manic grin.

SPARTACUS

stares in horror, tears his eyes from Crixus to see Agron, Duro, and the rest of the men also being scraped down to the GOLD beneath their flesh. SHEETS OF SKIN drift to the flagstones at their feet like strips of curled parchment.

DEAD VARRO (O.S.)

This is what you are to him.

Spartacus looks to the Attending Slave, is stunned to see him replaced by Dead Varro.

DEAD VARRO

Gold, mined from blood and meat.

DIANA (O.S.)

All hail Spartacus.

Spartacus turns to find a WOMAN approaching, dressed like Ilithyia from their sexual rendezvous in episode 109. THE MASK OF DIANA stares at him, cold and impassive.

DIANA

Slayer of the Shadow. Bringer of Rain.

(caressing his chest)

Champion of the Romans...

BLOOD leaks from the corner of her mouth, staining the pristine mask. Spartacus reaches for it with a trembling hand. He pulls it away, screams as the BLOOD SPLATTERED FACE OF DEAD SURA is revealed (Note: Sura's blood and injuries should match the end of episode 106).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SMASH TO:

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus SCREAMS, back arching in a rigid convulsion as he thrashes. Mira and the Medicus struggle to lash his arms and legs with LEATHER STRAPS. His HOWLS OF AGONY echo as we SMASH TO --

EXT. ARENA - CAPUA - DAY

The CROWD roars as a HOPLOMACHUS collapses to the sand, SCREAMING, blood gushing from his helmet.

AGRON

slams his sword through the Hoplomachus' back, his blade coming out through the man's chest in a spray of blood. Agron rips his own damaged helmet off, spotting

DURO

on his knees, a PROVOCATOR close to finishing him off as he SLAMS his sword against Duro's shield.

AGRON

Duro!

He realizes he'll never reach him in time. In one fluid movement, he grabs the dead Hoplomachus' spear and hurls it with all his might.

THE SPEAR

slices through the air and SLAMS into the Provocator's helmet in an explosion of blood and brains. He goes down, twitches, lays still. The crowd roars.

DURO

wrenches off his helmet and rises, looking toward his brother. Gratitude -- and shame -- well in his eyes.

PULVINUS

Batiatus, Lucretia, NUMERIUS, DOMITIA and several other distinguished CAPUANS clap excitedly. The POMPEII MAGISTRATE and his ENTOURAGE look on, faces dour. Batiatus gloats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

Is this the best the great Pompeii
has to offer?

(to Domitia)

I fear the games shall be a
disappointment this year.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE

These early skirmishes count for
nothing. It is the Primus that
decides the victor. Absent your man
Spartacus, Capua shall once again
find itself in Pompeii's shadow.

LUCRETIA

Perhaps Crixus shall bring light to
the matter.

Lucretia dabs at the sweat building on her brow, motions for
Naevia to bring her wine.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE

Crixus, yes. The crowd will be
amazed... that the Gaul is still
alive.

DOMITIA

Batiatus assures us he has
recovered from his injuries.

NUMERIUS

That he survived at all is
impressive. No gladiator from
Pompeii ever lived against
Theokoles.

BATIATUS

(laughs)

Young Numerius cuts to the truth.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE

A talent inherited from his father.

He indicates the seat of prominence, standing empty.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE (cont'd)

Does good Calavius intend to grace
us with his presence? The day grows
short.

Domitia shifts uncomfortably, forcing a smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOMITIA

Critical matters of trade with Picentia. He must have been delayed on his return.

BATIATUS

I am certain he will turn up presently.

OFF Batiatus' double-edged smile...

INT. CISTERNS - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Ashur moves down a corridor by the flickering light of an OIL LAMP. He enters into --

INT. CISTERNS - CHAMBER - DAY

Ashur stops short. Aulus sleeps against the wall. The Magistrate sits slumped in his chair, his head covered with the burlap sack.

ASHUR

Aulus!

(kicks him)

Up, you fucking goat! Dominus does not pay you to dream of tits and cunts.

Aulus stirs, irritated.

AULUS

Place foot on me again, and find yourself once more a cripple.

ASHUR

You know the stakes we deal. If Calavius were to escape --

Aulus rises.

AULUS

Fuck your mouth closed. The man has not stirred.

Ashur holds the lantern up, peers at the Magistrate. Slumped over. Lifeless. Ashur tenses, his heart catching in his chest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR
Nor does he breathe! Batiatus
commanded he not expire until the
appointed hour!

AULUS
(annoyed)
He still lives, you fucking woman.

Aulus moves to the Magistrate, prods him.

AULUS (cont'd)
Rouse yourself, peacock!

The Magistrate does not stir. Ashur glares.

AULUS (cont'd)
Shit...

Aulus pulls the sack from the Magistrate's head. His eyes
are closed, SPITTLE snaking from his mouth. Aulus leans
down, ear close to the Magistrate's face to catch signs of
breath.

ASHUR
This is on you. I will share no
part --

AULUS
Quiet!

A beat as Aulus listens. He breaks into a relieved smile,
glancing back to Ashur.

AULUS (cont'd)
He breathes. I told you the man was
still alive --

The Magistrate's eyes suddenly slam open as he attacks with
a snarl, SINKING HIS TEETH INTO AULUS' NECK. Aulus shrieks.

ASHUR
Aulus!

Ashur rushes forward, tries to pull Aulus away. For a
moment, it's a tug-of-war. Finally, with a SICKENING RIP, he
tears Aulus free. Aulus screams, clutching his bleeding
neck.

THE MAGISTRATE

spits out a hunk of BLOODY FLESH, eyes alight, BLOOD running
down his chin, laughing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGISTRATE

I will see you both nailed to the
cross! You and your fucking master
--

Aulus snarls, unleashes his fists on the Magistrate. Blood
and teeth fly.

ASHUR

Aulus, enough! Aulus!

Ashur pulls him back. The Magistrate groans, barely
conscious. Aulus breathes hard, his hand going to his neck.

ASHUR (cont'd)

Let me see.

Ashur holds the lamp up, inspects the wound. It isn't
pretty.

ASHUR (cont'd)

Ugly as a whore's gash, but you
will live. Return to the ludus and
have Medicus attend to it.

AULUS

You have the balls to see this
through alone?

ASHUR

Two of them. Very large. Go.

Aulus exits. Ashur turns to the Magistrate, troubled. His
eyes fall to a BLOOD STAINED SIGNET RING on the Magistrate's
finger. OFF ASHUR, weighing the consequences of what he's
been commanded to do...

EXT. ARENA - NIGHT

The sands are absent gladiators. The crowd BOOS and throws
garbage at the lack of action.

INT. CHUTES - ARENA - NIGHT

Crixus paces like a caged animal. Doctore stands at the
gate, looking out at the empty arena.

CRIXUS

We wait an eternity. Why do they
not begin the Primus?

EXT. PULVINUS - ARENA - NIGHT

The Pompeii Magistrate huffs at the din of the crowd.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE
The crowd threatens riot. We can
await Calavius no longer.

Domitia tries to hide the concern for her absent husband as she turns to Batiatus.

DOMITIA
Good Batiatus. Would you present
the Primus in my husband's place?

BATIATUS
If you think it proper...

DOMITIA
Please.

Batiatus catches Lucretia's eye, a twinkle sparkling in his own. He rises, holds up his hands for silence. The CHANTING dies down.

BATIATUS
Capua! In honor of Magistrate
Calavius, who is absent attending
vital business on your behalf, I
present the Primus against Pompeii!

The CROWD roars in excitement. The Capuans begin chanting Spartacus' name. Batiatus shifts nervously, puts on his best smile.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
Yes! Yes, we all desire to see
Spartacus, the Bringer of Rain,
take the sands in victory! But
sadly this day shall not see him
with sword in hand!

The crowd reacts with shock, BABBLING CONFUSION.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
Yet there is cause to rejoice! This
is a glorious moment, much
anticipated! For it marks the
return to the arena of Capua's
favored son... Crixus! Murmillo!

A wave of dismay washes across the crowd, erupting in BOOS THAT CARRY US INTO...

INT. CHUTES - ARENA - NIGHT

CLOSE ON CRIXUS, stone-faced but unable to mask his hurt pride from the crowd's reaction. Doctore glowers.

CRIXUS

They have forgotten the honor I
have brought them.

DOCTORE

Then it is time you reminded them
who their true champion is.

A proud look from teacher to student. Crixus gathers himself, pulling on his helmet as he steps out into --

EXT. ARENA - NIGHT

Crixus takes the sand. He's greeted with a rousing chorus of BOOS.

PULVINUS

The Pompeii Magistrate chuckles.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE

It appears Capua does not care for
your selection.

Lucretia forces a smile, looking somewhat ill. Batiatus glares at the remark, returns to the crowd.

BATIATUS

He faces a most vile opponent,
belched from the bowels of Pompeii.
I give you Pericles! Thraex!

ARENA

PERICLES enters. A huge, chiseled GREEK (or Numidian god, depending on casting). He raises his sword in honor to the Pompeii Magistrate.

PULVINUS

The Pompeii Magistrate waves to Pericles, delighted.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE

I pray the match will be overly
brief!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NUMERIUS
 (whispered to
 Batiatus)
 I would see his fat smirk removed.
 Give the command.

Batiatus gives the signal to Crixus and Pericles.

BATIATUS
 Begin!

ARENA

Crixus attacks, driving Pericles back. The Crowd cheers and groans, depending on which side they're rooting for. Crixus assaults Pericles like a man possessed, landing devastating blows.

PERICLES COUNTERS,

redirecting the assault back on Crixus. Crixus goes on the defensive. Pericles swings around and slams his shield into Crixus' helmet. BLOOD FLIES from Crixus' face plate.

CRIXUS STAGGERS BACK

As Pericles presses his attack. His sword slices through Crixus' manica (forearm guard), the SPLASH OF BLOOD WIPING US TO --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON A BLEEDING WOUND. WIDEN TO REVEAL Medicus applying a bandage to Aulus' neck.

MEDICUS
 What was the fucking cause?

AULUS
 A dog, soon to be put down.

Medicus grunts, pinches some POWDER into a cup of wine.

MEDICUS
 Drink.

AULUS
 Smells like piss.

MEDICUS
 Henbane. To help you rest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Aulus knocks it back with a grimace, stretches out on the table. Medicus stifles a yawn, barks to Mira tending to Spartacus across the room.

MEDICUS (cont'd)
I need food and a few hours sleep.
Come for me if his condition
changes.

Mira nods and Medicus exits. Mira wrings out a wet cloth, gingerly places it across Spartacus' fevered brow. OFF her concern...

EXT. ARENA - NIGHT

A CLASH OF STEEL as Pericles and Crixus trade thunderous blows. TIME SLOWS as Pericles lands a devastating blow. Crixus slams to the ground, his helmet dislodging from the impact. Pericles struts for the Crowd, milking the moment.

PULVINUS

The Pompeii Magistrate laughs at the display.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE
Another year, another "favored son"
of Capua gone to grass.

BATIATUS
(tightly)
The match is not yet concluded.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE
(waves it away)
Formalities of blood. Your man is
finished.

LUCRETIA
Crixus has the heart of a lion.
Look! He yet rises --

Lucretia herself rises from her chair, only to stagger, her legs betraying her.

BATIATUS
Lucretia!

He eases her back into her chair, calls to Naevia.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
(to Naevia)
Water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POMPEII MAGISTRATE
Your wife does not fare well at the
sight of your man about to be
slaughtered.

Batiatus throws him a toxic glance. He takes the water from
Naevia, holds it to Lucretia's lips.

DOMITIA
Slowly.

Lucretia swallows, gaining her bearing.

LUCRETIA
Apologies. The heat...

BATIATUS
(to Naevia)
See her back to the villa.

LUCRETIA
It will pass.

BATIATUS
No argument. I will join you
afterwards.

He gives her a pointed look. Lucretia nods, reluctantly
giving in.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
Naevia.

Naevia helps Lucretia up, throwing a desperate glance at her
love battling for his life down in the arena as she exits.

ARENA

Crixus is getting hammered. Pericles again sends him to the
ground. The crowd boos, throwing garbage. Crixus gets
pelted. His eyes narrow, the crowd's mockery igniting him.
He spits blood, rises to lock eyes with Pericles with a look
that says: "Is that all you got?"

PERICLES

nods at the challenge, charges. They slam into each other,
titans clashing in a fight for the ages. Crixus spins and
deflects, counters and attacks. Pericles is forced on the
defensive as he's hammered back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE CROWD ROARS,

sensing the shift in momentum. The Capuan fans begin CHANTING Crixus name. He gains strength from it, a grim smile forming.

TIME SLOWS

as Crixus executes a full 180 degree spin, his blade slicing Pericles' stomach open in a CASCADE OF BLOOD.

PERICLES

drops hard to his knees, VISCERA SPILLING from the yawning wound and SLAPPING THE SAND. He looks up at Crixus for a stunned beat before collapsing to the sand. Crixus raises his boot and brings it down hard,

CRUSHING PERICLES' HELMET

in an explosion of GORE AND BRAINS. The Crowd goes insane. Crixus thrusts his arms up in victory, beaming -- but his smile fades as he looks up to...

THE PULVINUS

...and discovers Naevia is absent. Batiatus steps into the FRAME, roaring his approval at Crixus' victory.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Crixus! Returned to form as promised!

NUMERIUS

(to Pompeii
Magistrate)

Your prayers have been answered.
The match was overly brief.

Batiatus laughs. The Pompeii Magistrate scowls, rising.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE

Good fortune to Capua, and all its
deserving citizens.

BATIATUS

Linger a moment! Let us have drink
and relive the glorious --

Batiatus is interrupted by a MESSENGER, escorted by a GUARD.

MESSENGER

Dominus...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands Batiatus a message scroll. Batiatus takes it, waves the man away as he reads.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE
 What news so urgent it interrupts
 the gloating of good Batiatus?

The Pompeii entourage chuckles. Batiatus tenses at what he reads.

BATIATUS
 The Magistrate's caravan has been
 discovered at the edge of town. His
 guards murdered.

DOMITIA
 No.

NUMERIUS
 What of my father?

BATIATUS
 He was not among them. Yet there
 were tracks, leading into the city.

DOMITIA
 Back to Capua? Why would anyone
 commit such treachery?

BATIATUS
 Ransom... or simple mischief on
 such a day.

Batiatus throws an accusatory glance at the Pompeii Magistrate, who bristles at the implication.

POMPEII MAGISTRATE
 You overstep, lanista.
 (to Domitia)
 This burden saddens me. If I may be
 of any assistance...

BATIATUS
 The matter is of Capua.

A tense beat. Domitia barely holds back the tears, siding with Batiatus.

DOMITIA
 (to Pompeii
 Magistrate)
 Gratitude. We shall see it handled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Pompeii Magistrate bows, exits with his entourage.

BATIATUS

I shall gather my men to aid in the search. Numerius, your presence is welcome.

DOMITIA

No. I would have him safely at my side.

NUMERIUS

Mother.

BATIATUS

I will never let him from my sight, Domitia. You have my oath on it.

Domitia hesitates, gives in with a nod.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Come, Numerius. Let us to your father.

OFF BATIATUS, his eyes barely masking the sinister intent of his words...

EXT. MARKETPLACE - CAPUA - NIGHT

A CITY SEARCH PARTY (not Batiatus) passes by with torches. Ashur disengages from the shadows, maneuvering down the street to where Solonius awaits.

SOLONIUS

You send message, yet I wait as a common slave.

ASHUR

Apologies. It was difficult to move without notice.

SOLONIUS

The alarm is up across the city. Speak quickly. I join the search for good Calavius. He has gone missing.

ASHUR

I am aware of his absence. The very matter I wish to broach.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ashur presses something into Solonius' hand. He examines it, stunned to find the BLOODY SIGNET RING OF CALAVIUS.

SOLONIUS
Calavius' ring!

ASHUR
Softly!

Solonius pulls Ashur into the shadows, lowering his voice.

SOLONIUS
How did you come by this?

ASHUR
Through means pressing upon your desires. Batiatus holds him captive, with intent of murder.

SOLONIUS
Madness, even for Batiatus.

ASHUR
Magistrate Calavius insults him, obstructs his ambitions. I have never seen Batiatus so unhinged. I would sever bonds, least I find myself upon the cross beside him.

SOLONIUS
Calavius. He yet lives?

ASHUR
For the briefest of moments.

SOLONIUS
Where is he held?

Ashur hesitates.

SOLONIUS (cont'd)
You speak of severing bonds, yet remain firmly tethered!

ASHUR
I hold no love for old loyalties, yet Calavius has seen my face! I must flee this city, and would have proper means to do so.

Solonius tears off his purse and shoves it into Ashur's hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLONIUS

Take it. And more, once Batiatus
and his treachery are laid to rest.
Come, we must gather men.

ASHUR

Calavius will be dead before you
do. Batiatus already moves towards
his plan. Are you armed?

SOLONIUS

A simple dagger --

ASHUR

Enough to cut the ropes. Quickly!
Or see opportunity fade!

Ashur hustles off, fear flashing across his face. Solonius follows with an excited grin, WIPING US TO --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Aulus lies on a table, pale and unconscious. BLOOD seeps through the bandage on his neck. Mira frowns at him as she passes with a basin of fresh water, not caring for the memory of his hands on her. She kneels beside

SPARTACUS,

gently wipes his fevered brow with a cool compress. As she moves to wring it out his eyes flicker and slowly open. He blinks, painfully adjusting to consciousness. POP WIDE to REVEAL we are now in --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT (DREAM)

Dark. Empty. No sign of Mira or Aulus. Spartacus sits up, disoriented. FILTERED MOONLIGHT falls through the barred windows. A LIGHT WIND blows DEAD LEAVES through the doorway. The Infirmary appears LONG-ABANDONED, shelves of scrolls and clay jars shrouded with DUSTY COBWEBS.

SPARTACUS

(weakly)
Medicus...?

He is answered only by the WIND. He coughs, starts to rise, freezes. He's no longer alone. Someone now lies on the center table (where Varro's body rested in scene 1), covered by a

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRISTINE WHITE SHROUD

that rises and falls with each breath. Spartacus stares in mute dread. His hand reaches out to pull the shroud back, but before he can the figure beneath STOPS BREATHING.

SPOTS OF BLOOD BLOSSOM

on the fabric, SOAKING THROUGH AND GROWING. Spartacus steels himself and yanks the shroud back, revealing

DEAD THRACIAN SPARTACUS,

his throat hacked open from the killing wound Spartacus inflicted in the arena (in Episode 107). Spartacus stares in horror and confusion.

DEAD SURA (O.S.)

He was so beautiful...

Spartacus whips his eyes over to the doorway, shocked to see Dead Sura. Though pale, she is no longer the blood-drenched horror show from his last nightmare. She wears her Thracian dress from episode 101.

DEAD SURA

Why did you kill him?

SPARTACUS

(welling with tears)

I had no choice. A man must accept his fate --

Spartacus turns back to Thracian Spartacus, only to discover that it's now DEAD VARRO on the table. Dead Sura is suddenly right beside Spartacus.

DEAD SURA

Or be destroyed by it.

Spartacus begins to break down, wracked by guilt.

SPARTACUS

Is this my path? Blood and death?

DEAD SURA

You have always been destined for unfortunate things...

She gently kisses him. He slowly responds, the tears staining his cheeks as he loses himself in the kiss -- until BLOOD BEGINS LEAKING FROM BETWEEN THEIR PRESSED LIPS. He pulls back, horrified to discover he's now in --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT (DREAM)

Spartacus, wearing his ORNATE SNAKE ARMOR, cradles DYING SURA in his arms near the back of the transport wagon (replaying the end of episode 106).

SPARTACUS

Please... Do not leave me again...

DYING SURA

(a whisper)

It was you... who left...

The life fades from her eyes. Spartacus sobs, holding her close. A light wind kicks up. Spartacus' heart cracks as he realizes he's no longer holding Sura in his arms, only her DEATH SHROUD. It slips from his fingers, the wind taking it. ADJUST TO FIND Dead Varro standing behind Spartacus.

DEAD VARRO

You must tend to the wound.

Spartacus looks up as Batiatus passes him (dressed as he was at the end of 106). Batiatus steps up onto the wagon wheel to consult with the DRIVER. Spartacus rises to follow. Batiatus steps away, revealing a BLOOD-SPLATTERED AULUS clutching his wounded side.

AULUS

Attacked... on the road...

Spartacus is suddenly roughly shoved by DEAD VARRO, now dressed as Hector the guard, propelling us to --

INT. BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY (DREAM)

Dead Varro dressed as Hector escorts Spartacus (now in his subligaria) back to the ludus (replaying scene 6). Spartacus' attention is drawn to

A CHAMBER

where a naked Aulus is being plied with oils by two SLAVE GIRLS. Slave Girl #1 is topless, standing behind Aulus, her hands sensually caressing the villain's flesh. SLAVE GIRL #2 (clothed) sinks to her knees in front of Aulus, her hand stroking

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE SMOOTH, UNBROKEN SKIN

OF HIS RIGHT SIDE (NO SCARS). She glances up as Spartacus passes -- only now it is DEAD SURA (no blood) dressed as Mira from before. Her eyes flash with pain and regret.

DEAD SURA

Tend to the wound.

Spartacus stares in confusion -- then finally understands, his eyes locking onto Aulus' side where he was supposed to have been cut open protecting Sura. There is no scar, no blemish, no trace of the injury. The wound was a lie.

SPARTACUS SCREAMS

as Aulus (now dressed as he was at the end of 106) suddenly stabs Dead Sura (also dressed from 106) in the chest. As the blade sinks into her flesh, SMASH TO --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus bursts awake, the scream lingering on his lips. Mira, startled, tries to calm him.

MIRA

I am here. Be still...

Spartacus tries to get his bearings, eyes wild, the leather straps restraining him.

MIRA (cont'd)

The fever has broken. The gods have blessed you...

Spartacus' eyes fall on Aulus, still asleep in his Henbane-induced haze. A grim smile bends Spartacus' parched, cracked lips.

SPARTACUS

Yes. They have.

MIRA

I will fetch Medicus.

SPARTACUS

Wait. Release the straps.

(re: Aulus)

I would speak to this man. Alone.

Mira eyes Aulus, not understanding -- nor liking the tone in Spartacus' voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRA
Towards what purpose?

SPARTACUS
(ignoring the
question)
Wait in the corridor. Sound warning
if anyone approaches.

She hesitates, uncertain.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
Do this for me, Mira. And I shall
be in your debt.

OFF MIRA, struggling with the decision... OMITTED

EXT. MARKETPLACE - CAPUA - NIGHT

Batiatus, Numerius and a knot of Batiatus' ARMED GUARDS
(including Hector) move through the streets.

NUMERIUS
There is no sign of him. My father
could be held anywhere.

BATIATUS
He is a man much esteemed, and
easily recognized.

Batiatus artfully pauses across from the gated entrance to
the cisterns. An ancient corbel arch of crumbling stone,
flanked by two iron TORCH SCONCES, flagstone steps leading
down into darkness.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
How could he be moved through the
streets without notice?

NUMERIUS
(frustrated, near
tears)
I do not know.

BATIATUS
Think. There must be a way...

Numerius' eyes fall on the entrance to the cisterns.

NUMERIUS
The cisterns! They run beneath the
city and beyond!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS
 (to his men)
 Torches! Wrest the gate open!

The Guards hustle to comply. Batiatus clasps Numerius' shoulder in reassurance.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
 You will soon be with your father,
 Numerius. You have my word.

NUMERIUS
 Your part in this shall not be
 forgotten.

Numerius pushes his fears aside as he heads down into the cisterns.

BATIATUS
 (softly, to himself)
 No, it shall not.

Batiatus and his Guards follow Numerius down into the bowels of the city, WIPING US TO --

INT. CISTERN - CHAMBER - NIGHT

ON MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS, slumped in his chair, unconscious, sack over his head. A beat. DIM LIGHT floods the chamber as we adjust to find Ashur appear with a torch, Solonius at his side in the mouth of the chamber.

SOLONIUS
 Calavius --

He starts forward, but Ashur stops him, hearing the sound of MEN approaching.

ASHUR
 Wait. They approach!

SOLONIUS
 We must hurry.

ASHUR
 No, it is too late.

Ashur panics, turns to flee. Solonius grabs his arm.

SOLONIUS
 Steel your fucking nerve!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR

I will not end murdered for you or
any man! Consider Ashur a spirit,
and Capua the world he left behind!

He wrenches free, dropping his torch as he scurries off into
the darkness.

SOLONIUS

(a harsh whisper)

Ashur!

He is gone. Batiatus' approach echoes in the distance.
Solonius hustles over to Calavius, whipping out his dagger.

SOLONIUS (cont'd)

(hissed, to
Calavius)

They are upon us! We must get you
free...

As he begins cutting the Magistrate's blood-soaked ropes...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CISTERNS - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

RAMP TO SLOW MOTION as Numerius leads the way through the
dank cisterns. Behind him Batiatus subtly nods to Hector and
his Guards. They unsheathe their swords, unnoticed by
Numerius.

INT. CISTERNS - CHAMBER - NIGHT

Solonius finishes cutting the Magistrate loose (still in
SLOW MOTION). The Magistrate tumbles from the chair, the
sack over his head dislodging as he hits the ground.
Solonius' eyes widen with horror as he sees

THE MAGISTRATE IS ALREADY DEAD,

eyes open but unseeing, his THROAT SLIT.

NUMERIUS (O.S.)

Solonius!

Solonius spins, RAMPING US BACK TO NORMAL SPEED. Numerius
stands in the entrance with Batiatus and his armed Guards.
Solonius glances down at the knife in his hand, slick from
the blood on the ropes. He is officially fucked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLONIUS
(stammers)
No --

BATIATUS
Seize him!

Batiatus' men rush forward. Solonius makes a break for it, slashing at the Guards with his knife. Hector catches him hard across the face with the pommel of his sword. Solonius smashes to the ground, dazed, spitting blood.

NUMERIUS

rushes to his dead father, the tears flowing as he cradles his gory remains.

NUMERIUS
(sobbing)
Father... father...

BATIATUS
We shall see him avenged. Solonius
will suffer for what he has done.

Solonius spots Ashur emerging from the shadows behind Batiatus' men, a smile bending his lips. As if he had always been there.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
And all of Capua will know him for
the shit that he is.

Solonius looks up at Batiatus through the blood and pain as the realization slams into him that his enemy just set him up. WHAM! Batiatus brings his foot down on Solonius' face, directly at CAMERA, SMASHING US TO BLACK.

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON AULUS' ROBES as they are roughly torn open. WIDEN TO REVEAL an unsteady Spartacus standing over the unconscious man, searching his torso for the injury received "protecting" Sura. There is NO SIGN OF A SCAR, the skin smooth and unbroken. Aulus' hand suddenly shoots out, grabbing Spartacus' wrist.

AULUS
What are you doing?!

Spartacus locks eyes with the groggy Aulus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

Tell me what happened.

AULUS

Take your hands from me.

SPARTACUS

(the rage building)

My wife. Sura. The slave you were transporting from Neapolis.

AULUS

You already know.

SPARTACUS

Tell me what happened to her.

AULUS

(a beat)

We were attacked, on the road. They were on me before --

SPARTACUS

Where is your wound? Where is the wound you earned trying to save my wife?

A tense beat. Aulus knows he's in trouble. He suddenly surges up.

AULUS

Guard --

But Spartacus is on him, his arm constricting around Aulus' throat from behind. Aulus gasps for air.

SPARTACUS

Why?! Tell me!

AULUS

(gasping)

I... only did... as commanded...

SPARTACUS

Who spoke the words that took her life? Who?!

Tears stain Spartacus' face. Aulus gasps, blood from his injured neck flowing.

AULUS

(a harsh whisper)

Batiatus... It was Batiatus...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spartacus' eyes blacken with pure, primordial rage as he tightens his grip. Blood pours from Aulus' mouth. He convulses, lies mercifully still.

SPARTACUS RISES,

drained and shattered by the revelation that his life has been a lie, perpetrated by a man he had come to trust. He barely registers Mira, now standing horrified in the doorway.

MIRA

What have you done?

SPARTACUS

Help me restore him upon the table.

She hesitates, moves to comply.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

You will secure my straps again...
and never speak of this.

They heave Aulus' body onto the table. As it crashes down --

MATCH CUT TO:

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

Aulus' body is SLAMMED into the bed of a CART (the same one Sura arrived on in Ep. 106). PULL WIDE to REVEAL several GUARDS stepping away, done with taking out the trash. ANGLE ON --

THE BALCONY

Where Batiatus and Ashur bear witness to Aulus' final exit.

ASHUR

The wound did not appear fatal.

BATIATUS

The damage was deeper than the eye could perceive. Medicus tells he drowned in his own blood.

ASHUR

A loose end. No longer needing to be tied.

Batiatus grins at that, his mood bright.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

You have played your part well,
Ashur.

ASHUR

It was a greater hand than mine
that conceived it.

BATIATUS

Solonius was easily deceived by
your offer to betray me. As I knew
he would be.

ASHUR

He never suspected my loyalty
always lay with you, Dominus.

BATIATUS

A man who has no honor cannot
imagine such a trait in others. But
you, you possess the quality above
all others. And shall be rewarded
in kind.

ASHUR

Your will, Dominus.

Ashur smiles, in his element. Something draws Batiatus'
attention down in the square.

BATIATUS

The gods truly favor the House of
Batiatus! Behold! Spartacus has
risen from the dead!

Ashur follows his gaze down to --

THE TRAINING SQUARE

Spartacus, looking pale but much better, has taken to the
sand. Crixus and the other men are already training.
Spartacus arms himself with practice swords, pausing as
Batiatus calls to him.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Spartacus! The heart stirs to see
you among the living! You are well?

TIGHT PUSH IN ON SPARTACUS as he REPLIES:

SPARTACUS

Yes, Dominus. I am myself again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFF SPARTACUS, the proclamation holding a deeper truth, one filled with vengeance yet to come...

BLACKOUT.

END OF EPISODE

