

Mark of the Brotherhood

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FADE IN:

EXT. ARENA - DAY

A BLURRY, OUT OF FOCUS SHOT of a FIGURE running towards us in SLOW MOTION. No sound except LABORED BREATHING. The Figure comes into focus:

SPARTACUS,

bare chested, wielding two swords, his eyes glinting with impending violence. The CROWD ROARS as we RAMP TO NORMAL TIME. Spartacus slams into a HOPLOMACHUS, his swords expertly slicing into the Gladiator's flesh. He slices open the man's neck in a geyser of gore, the BLOOD WIPING US TO:

A SERIES OF FIGHTS

in the arena, spanning several months. One after the other, building in speed and ferocity as Spartacus decimates all who oppose him: A MURMIILLO gets his arm hacked off. A THRAEX is run through the chest with both of Spartacus' swords. Throats are slit and limbs are lost as Spartacus becomes increasingly splattered in the blood of his opponents, culminating in

A PROVOCATOR

being decapitated by Spartacus. He uses a scissor-like move, his two swords crossed then whipped outward, catching the Provocator's neck in between.

THE CROWD ERUPTS

as the man's head topples to the sand, followed a moment later by his body. Spartacus throws his swords up in victory, a vicious smile bending his lips: he's actually enjoying this. THE PULVINUS

SLAVES fan the cheering PATRICIANS that crowd the pulvinus. NAEVIA stands near BATIATUS and LUCRETIA, who sit with ILITHYIA in the front row. Ilithyia barely hides her disdain for Spartacus. SOLONIUS sits opposite Batiatus, trying to ignore his gloating rival.

BATIATUS

Spartacus, victor again! It is a marvel good Solonius has any men left!

The Patricians laugh as they rise to exit, the games concluded. Solonius forces a smile, fuming.

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ILITHYIA

Must the Thracian appear in every primus? Does the House of Batiatus not deem another gladiator worthy of spectacle?

SOLONIUS

They have no one else of note.

LUCRETIA

Crixus will return to glory presently.

Solonius bows as he exits, not believing it.

SOLONIUS

As you say.

ILITHYIA

A welcome addition. I grow tired of seeing the Thracian and his victories.

BATIATUS

Perhaps something of note to erase the tedium. I purchase a fresh batch of slaves at tomorrow's auction, to be trained as gladiators...

He gives Lucretia a knowing look. She catches his plan, initiates it.

LUCRETIA

We would be honored if you would grace us at the unveiling.

ILITHYIA

(excited)

What sort of beasts shall you procure?

BATIATUS

Only the most ferocious, to be displayed for your pleasure.

He smiles, eyes twinkling as they exit, WIPING US TO --

EXT. MARKET - CAPUA - DAY

CAMERA PANS across a SLAVE BLOCK. SIX MEN stand shackled before the gathered crowd. All are muscular, hard looking

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brutes. PLAQUES dangle from their necks, detailing their names and nationalities. Off to the side are a cluster of shackled FEMALE SLAVES, breasts exposed. ADJUST TO FIND

BATIATUS

approaching with DOCTORE and ASHUR in tow.

BATIATUS

Fortune favors us! A fine selection, and enough coin to have our pick.

ASHUR

Your competitor approaches.

Ashur nods towards Solonius making his way through the crowd.

BATIATUS

You give the man credit beyond his position.

(to Solonius,
loudly)

Solonius! My heart brims with joy! I had hoped to see you here, buying up more men for Spartacus to slaughter!

The Crowd laughs. Solonius steps close to Batiatus, bowing slightly.

SOLONIUS

Batiatus... now purse-proud and so potent with charm.

BATIATUS

How quickly Fortuna shifts her blessings.

SOLONIUS

A fact that beloved Ovidius was unexpectedly made aware.

BATIATUS

You speak truth. His murder was a deep tragedy.

SOLONIUS

Indeed. One can never know who is plotting violence, can they?

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BATIATUS

Or when they will commit the act.

Batiatus' smile curls, punctuating the thinly veiled threat. Doctore interrupts.

DOCTORE

The auction begins, Dominus.

BATIATUS

To business, then.

Batiatus moves closer to the auction with Doctore and Ashur. Solonius glares after them, his hatred for Batiatus expanding exponentially.

DOCTORE

The Gaul Segovax demands expense. And perhaps the two German brothers, Duro and Agron.

BATIATUS

The others?

DOCTORE

Of little worth.

THE SLAVE TRADER, a seedy peddler of human flesh, steps forward to address the crowd.

SLAVE TRADER

Good citizens of Capua! Behold the finest offerings of flesh and bone! Loosen your purse strings and bless your house with quality wares! Let us begin with a Celtic Gaul of imposing virtues! I give you Segovax!

SEGOVAX, an imposing Gaul, steps forward. Two barbaric German brothers, AGRON and DURO, stand behind him. From the looks on their faces, they don't care for Gauls.

SLAVE TRADER (cont'd)

Skin, his armor! Hands, his steel! Who would claim such a man?! Bid!

VIBIUS, mid 40s, thin and greasy yells out.

VIBIUS

Five denarii!

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CONTINUED:

SLAVE TRADER
Five from good Vibius!

SOLONIUS
Ten denarii!

BATIATUS
Twelve!

SOLONIUS
Fifteen!

BATIATUS
Twenty!

SOLONIUS
Twenty-five denarii!

The Crowd "OOHS". It's a hefty sum for a slave.

BATIATUS
(calls out)
I grow tired of bidding...

Solonius smiles, delighted... thinking he's won.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
One hundred denarii!!

The Crowd TITTERS. The Slave Trader gawks in shock and delight.

SLAVE TRADER
A hundred?

BATIATUS
For the entire lot.

SLAVE TRADER
Sold! To Batiatus! Savior of Capua!

The CROWD CHEERS. Solonius fumes.

DOCTORE
Dominus, with respect, your coin
exceeds their value.

BATIATUS
Fuck value! None can be placed on
seeing that cock eater's pride
ground beneath my heel.
(calling out)
Solonius!

(MORE)

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BATIATUS (cont'd)
 (re: female slaves)
 Consider the whores! Perhaps you
 will have better fortune fighting
 women in the arena!

The Crowd EXPLODES into LAUGHTER. Solonius forces a smile.
 Batiatus beams as he exits, his body WIPING US TO --

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

OVERHEAD SHOT of CRIXUS making love to Lucretia. Slow and
 methodical, a stark contrast to their usually explosive
 sessions. We DRIFT DOWN to REVEAL Lucretia, her face barely
 concealing her disappointment as Crixus climaxes. He rolls
 off of her, regards an impassive Lucretia.

CRIXUS
 Have I not pleased you, Domina?

LUCRETIA
 (masking best she
 can)
 Does your cock stand dry?

CRIXUS
 I fear you did not quake.
 Apologies. My wounds have yet to
 fully heal.

LUCRETIA
 You will recover. And all will be
 as it was.

Naevia enters.

NAEVIA
 Forgive me. Dominus returns from
 the market.

LUCRETIA
 (to Crixus)
 Out. Quickly.

Crixus stands, revealing the large unhealed scar that covers
 his stomach. He quickly pulls on his subligaria and follows
 Naevia out of the room. OFF Lucretia, unfulfilled, watching
 him go with a worried frown...

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Naevia escorts Crixus through the villa. A tense silence hangs between them. Crixus eyes her, uncomfortable.

CRIXUS

(hushed)

What would you have me do? Domina will grow curious if I refuse her.

NAEVIA

I know.

CRIXUS

I perform as weakly as I can, with hopes she will lose interest.

Naevia pauses at the door leading down to the ludus.

NAEVIA

I am not angry with you. It is only... I find it difficult that you and Domina share what we have not. For some time.

Crixus pulls her into a stolen kiss.

CRIXUS

You alone occupy my thoughts.

Guards approaching break the moment. Crixus moves through the gate, sneaks a final glance at a saddened Naevia before disappearing. OFF Naevia, heavy-hearted...

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

The SIX NEW RECRUITS are led in by GUARDS, loincloths serving as their lone covering. REVERSE TO THE GLADIATORS, shouting and jeering at the men, except for

SPARTACUS,

standing silent as he coolly observes the fresh meat being lined up in the training square.

CRIXUS

slyly falls in behind Spartacus, having just returned from Lucretia's bedchamber.

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DOCTORE

enters the square, whip in hand. The Gladiators respectfully quiet. Doctore surveys the Recruits with blazing contempt as he launches into his commencement speech.

DOCTORE

What is beneath your feet?

The men eye the sand in confusion, unsure how to reply. Duro finally responds.

DURO

Sand?

The Gladiators ROAR. Doctore frowns in disgust. Agron, Duro's brother, hisses to him.

AGRON

Fucking idiot.

Doctore CRACKS his whip, silencing the laughter.

DOCTORE

Spartacus! What is beneath your feet?

Spartacus steps forward. His words are delivered from a new place of belief.

SPARTACUS

Sacred ground, Doctore! Watered with tears of blood!

Crixus seethes. Not being on top means it's no longer his privilege to answer.

DOCTORE

(to Recruits)
Your tears. Your blood. Your pathetic lives, forged into something of worth...

VARRO slides up next to Ashur.

VARRO

Five denarii on the fool who answered. To survive and bear our mark.

DOCTORE

Turn your eyes from your gods and fix them upon me. Listen. Learn.

(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

DOCTORE (cont'd)
 And perhaps, live. As gladiators.
 Now, attend your master!

ASHUR
 Five. On the fool.

THE BALCONY

Batiatus steps out, followed by Lucretia and a flushed Ilithyia, who excitedly ogles the Recruits below. Naevia and a few attending Slaves hover in the background.

BATIATUS
 You have been blessed! Each and every one of you, to find yourselves here, in the ludus of Quintus Lentulus Batiatus! Finest purveyor of gladiators in all the Republic!

The Gladiators CHEER. Spartacus allows himself a grim smile. Ilithyia glances at Batiatus, whispers to Lucretia.

ILITHYIA
 Your husband speaks as my father would before the senate. He is quite the orator.

BATIATUS
 Prove yourself, in the hard days to follow. Prove yourself more than a common slave. Prove yourself more than a man. Fail, and die. Either here where you stand, or sold off to the mines.

LUCRETIA
 (to Ilithyia)
 The tongue of Apollo.

BATIATUS
 Succeed, and stand proud among my titans!

The Gladiators ROAR their approval. Doctore CRACKS HIS WHIP, silencing the uproar. He surveys the Recruits with dissatisfaction as he continues his "welcoming" speech from ep. 102.

DOCTORE
 A Gladiator does not fear death. He embraces it. Caresses it. Fucks it...

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Batiatus turns to Ilithyia.

BATIATUS

What have you of the new men?

ILITHYIA

They are spectacles! I find myself growing quite fond of this sordid business of gladiators.

Batiatus and Lucretia share a glance, sensing opportunity.

LUCRETIA

Perhaps you should consider purchasing one of your own.

ILITHYIA

A gladiator? I could never.
(thoughtful beat)
Could I?

BATIATUS

Choose a recruit, and he is yours -- for a nominal fee, of course. Such funds to cover the expense of his upkeep and training.

LUCRETIA

Each victory in the arena, an honor to his Domina.

Ilithyia hesitates, a little girl presented with the option of too much candy. She giggles, unable to resist.

ILITHYIA

Who should I choose?!

BATIATUS

May I offer suggestion to aid your decision?

(calling down)

Doctore! Our honored guest wishes to assess the recruits' virtus.

Gladiators HOWL. Spartacus chuckles. Doctore CRACKS his whip as the Recruits exchange confused glances.

DOCTORE

Remove your cloths!

The Recruits hesitantly remove their covering. The Gladiators EXPLODE with laughter. They point at each

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Recruit's manliness, jeering at them -- except for Segovax, who possesses a huge cock. VARRO hisses to Ashur.

VARRO

I wish to alter my bet. Everything
on the one with the horse cock.

THE BALCONY

Ilithyia eyes Segovax with lust.

ILITHYIA

The one on the left...

BATIATUS

Segovax. The Gaul.

ILITHYIA

He has truly been blessed by the
god Priapus. He is my choice!

BATIATUS

A fine specimen!

LUCRETIA

A champion to be sure.

Ilithyia beams, hugs Lucretia.

ILITHYIA

We must celebrate!

LUCRETIA

(to Naevia)
See to the wine.

Naevia nods, exits. Ilithyia giggles as she follows her inside. Batiatus stops Lucretia, whispers in her ear.

BATIATUS

Has a man ever had such a wife?

LUCRETIA

She but loves her husband, and
would see him elevated.

BATIATUS

(kissing her)
Maneuver the girl to our purpose.

Lucretia replies with a conspiratorial smile. She exits,
WIPING US TO -

INT. TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

TIGHT ON A CUP being filled with wine. WIDEN TO REVEAL Ilithyia reclining on a sofa as Naevia attends to her cup. Lucretia lies opposite her on another sofa, sipping her own cup. SLAVES fan them.

ILITHYIA
 (brimming with
 excitement)
 A gladiator of my own, mined from
 the same lands as Crixus!
 (a knowing smile)
 Do all Gauls possess such...
 impressive qualities?

Lucretia smiles politely, avoiding the insinuation.

LUCRETIA
 I have heard it is one of their
 bolder assets.

Ilithyia giggles, sips at her wine.

ILITHYIA
 The envy of my friends shall spread
 like locusts, their hearts
 devoured.

Lucretia picks up on that possible avenue to exploit.

LUCRETIA
 Who would you torture so? No one of
 my acquaintance, I hope.

ILITHYIA
 Doubtful. Caecilia, Aemilia...
 (stressing)
 Licinia.

LUCRETIA
 Licinia? Cousin to Marcus Crassus?

ILITHYIA
 The wealthiest man in Rome --
 according to him, at least. Licinia
 in particular enjoys the games.
 More so the beasts who do battle in
 them.

LUCRETIA
 Well, then... you must extend
 invitation for private introduction
 (MORE)

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LUCRETIA (cont'd)
to your man Segovax. Here, at the
villa.

ILITHYIA
These are proper Roman women. They
only mingle with families of equal
standing.

Lucretia smiles through the slight.

LUCRETIA
Perhaps it is for the best. Seeing
your man in the flesh would only
inflame their envy.

Ilithyia can't resist the thought, laughs in acquiescence.

ILITHYIA
I will arrange it. I shall even
help you with your hair. We must
make you suitable for such elevated
company.

OFF Lucretia, her smile her armor as her plans advance...

INT. MESS HALL/TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Spartacus and Varro sit at a table with bowls of food.
Crixus and the other Gladiators fill up the remaining
tables. Varro regards the Recruits as they finish sparring
in the training square under Doctore's tutelage.

VARRO
Shit baking in the sun. Seems only
yesterday we were of a similar
position.

Spartacus glances at the Recruits.

SPARTACUS
Much has changed.

Varro's thoughts fall to his wife and her surprising
pregnancy.

VARRO
Much. You became the fucking
Champion of Capua. Your myth to
echo for a thousand years. And I --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS
 (i.e. shut the fuck
 up)
 -- became a good friend.

An uncomfortable beat, broken by RHASKOS calling from the far corner. He shakes a pair of dice in his hand.

RHASKOS
 Varro! The dice call your name!

VARRO
 And Varro answers.

Varro stands to leave. Spartacus shoots him a look.

SPARTACUS
 You continue to gamble.

VARRO
 A few coins to pass the time.
 Nothing to concern yourself with.
 Friend.

Spartacus watches Varro move off, not caring for the response. WHAM! His attention is drawn to RECRUIT #4 as he CRASHES across a table. Crixus has just shoved him back as the Recruits enter to eat.

CRIXUS
 You fucking wait until gladiators
 have filled their bellies. If there
 is any left...

The Gladiators laugh as Crixus ladles huge amounts of stew from the pot into his bowl.

SPARTACUS
 Crixus.

Crixus darkens as Spartacus approaches.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
 Let them eat.

CRIXUS
 (hissing)
 They must embrace pain and
 suffering to become gladiators.
 This is how it is done.

SPARTACUS
 Not by you. Let them eat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A tense beat. Crixus tosses his bowl into the pot in disgust.

CRIXUS
Spartacus the Kind and Gentle,
offering hugs and warm kisses.

SPARTACUS
Do not mistake me, Crixus. I give
no shit about these men. But you
are no longer the Champion of
Capua. You do not take lead here.
You follow.

The mess hall has gone quiet. Ashur chews on a piece of bread, clocking the confrontation with interest. A tense beat.

CRIXUS
The man who follows is forever at
your back. Something to consider,
Champion.

Crixus moves off, his hatred of Spartacus all consuming.

AGRON
(to Duro)
Fucking Gauls.

Agron tosses Segovax a withering look. Segovax ignores him, retrieves the bowl from the pot.

SEGOVAX
(to Spartacus)
Much gratitude.

SPARTACUS
Men should not die with empty
stomachs.

Spartacus truly doesn't care about Segovax or the other men. He moves off, WIPING US TO --

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Ashur moves down the corridor with half naked SLAVE GIRLS, escorted by GUARDS. He pauses at Rhaskos' cell.

ASHUR
Rhaskos.

Rhaskos appears with a grin.

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CONTINUED:

RHASKOS

End of the month already, is it?

ASHUR

According to the calendar you
cannot read.

Ashur consults a sheaf of parchment with names and figures.

ASHUR (cont'd)

Your winnings amount to three and a
half denarii. Preserve coin, or
indulge yourself?

RHASKOS

When do I ever favor coin over
gash?

Ashur nods to a Slave Girl, who enters the cell and
disrobes.

ASHUR

I expect her ass to be returned
free from blood.

RHASKOS

My cock considers both holes equal.
Find yourself lucky it does not
favor yours.

Rhaskos removes his subligaria as he ushers the girl into
his cell. Ashur continues down the corridor, Guards and
Slave Girls in tow. Crixus appears, having been passed by.

CRIXUS

Ashur. You pass my cell by mistake.

ASHUR

The mistake is yours. You do not
fight, you are entitled to neither
coin nor cunt.

Crixus glares, his eyes filling with violence. One of the
Guard's hands drops to his sword, a gesture that does not go
unnoticed.

CRIXUS

The Dominus shall hear of this.

Ashur indicates his parchment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR

His very hand set the names.
Perhaps next month you shall find
yourself again among them, should
your wounds ever heal.

Ashur spots Varro further down the corridor.

ASHUR (cont'd)

Varro! A moment.

He hobbles after him, leaving Crixus seething in his wake.

ASHUR (cont'd)

Your victories amass much coin.
Shall I see it transferred to your
wife as usual?

(indicating a Slave
Girl)

Or would you prefer a small portion
applied to more pressing concerns?

A VOLUPTUOUS SLAVE GIRL smiles at Varro, liking what she
sees. OFF the temptation...

INT. CORRIDOR/BARRACKS - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus, returning from a bath, moves down the corridor.
SOUNDS OF FUCKING echo off the walls as various Gladiators
copulate with SLAVE GIRLS. Spartacus slows as he comes upon

VARRO,

in his cell fucking the Voluptuous Slave Girl. Varro catches
the look... then guiltily turns away, thrusting even harder.
Spartacus continues on in disgust, passing the

BARRACKS

The Recruits are sprawled across the floor, exhausted from
the day's training. Agron and Duro eye Spartacus as he
passes.

AGRON

(after a beat; re:
Spartacus)

That tiny man is the fucking
Champion of Capua?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DURO

Fucking Romans swell his legend to their advantage. We could easily best the man, Agron

SEGOVAX

Spartacus defeated Theokoles. The skies wept in honor of his victory. The two of you would present challenge equal to piss and shit.

A beat as the brothers stare at him -- then laugh.

SEGOVAX (cont'd)

You find my words amusing?

DURO

Your words, no.

AGRON

The stupid fuck that speaks them, very fucking amusing.

SEGOVAX

Spartacus is a man to be held as example. A slave that ignites the arena. And one day the flames shall set him free.

RECRUIT #4

I have witnessed such a thing. The roar of the crowd, demanding a gladiator be granted freedom for his showing in the arena.

DURO

You have not even earned the mark of the fucking brotherhood and you cluck about freedom.

AGRON

Bunch of fucking women. Cluck, cluck, cluck.

Recruit #4 hardens his resolve.

RECRUIT #4

Segovax is right. Spartacus shows us the way. I will train as he trains, every thrust and counter committed to memory. And one day... I too shall become legend in the arena.

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CONTINUED:

OFF the bold statement, SMASH CUT TO --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NEXT DAY

CLOSE ON the bloodied, dead face of Recruit #4 as his body is tossed onto a table by Guards. No glory in the arena for him. WIDEN TO REVEAL MEDICUS inspecting Crixus' wounds. Crixus stands stoic, masking the pain. Batiatus tensely awaits the news.

MEDICUS

His wounds need yet more time.

BATIATUS

How much more?

MEDICUS

A fortnight or two. Possibly three.

BATIATUS

Jupiter's cock!

MEDICUS

Recovery may be aided by certain herbs absent the apothecary.

Medicus hands Batiatus a list scrawled on a scrap of parchment.

CRIXUS

Dominus, I have been without sword for too long. Let me resume training.

Batiatus considers Crixus, his wounds.

BATIATUS

(to Medicus)

I will see all on the list procured.

(to Crixus)

Heed Medicus' warning. Your sword will return to your hand soon enough.

Batiatus exits. OFF Crixus' crushing disappointment...

INT. BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Batiatus walks with Ashur in tow. Ashur reviews the lengthy list provided by the Medicus.

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CONTINUED:

ASHUR
 (rattles off)
 Mandragora... henbane... lye...
 thorn apple... hemlock...
 belladonna... Half a dozen more. A
 substantial list, requiring
 substantial coin.

Batiatus frowns, fishes a purse of coins out of his robes
 and tosses it to Ashur.

BATIATUS
 Procure the highest quality.

ASHUR
 A justified expense, should remedy
 result.

BATIATUS
 May the gods see it fucking so.
 Many days pass without progress.

ASHUR
 When Doctore suffered wounds from
 Theokoles... did they require equal
 time in the healing?

BATIATUS
 Considerably less.

Ashur, always angling towards his benefit, presses.

ASHUR
 There may be a blessing hidden
 among such a curse. Talk of Crixus'
 true condition surely has not
 escaped beyond these walls. Yet.

Batiatus pauses.

BATIATUS
 Your meaning?

ASHUR
 Inquiries for his purchase could be
 made in a delicate fashion. My
 visit to the market could serve
 dual purposes.

BATIATUS
 Remove the thought. There will be
 no talk of selling Crixus.

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CONTINUED:

Batiatus continues moving through the villa. Ashur limps after him.

ASHUR

I only fear for the future,
Dominus. One that does not see
Spartacus erased from it.

BATIATUS

(angers)
Straighten your fucking tongue and
speak plainly.

ASHUR

Yesterday I witnessed the hatred
Crixus cultivates towards Spartacus
grow beyond measure. If in his mad
passions Crixus were to make
attempt on his life...

Ashur lets the implication hang heavy in the air. Batiatus chews on it, frowns at the taste.

BATIATUS

(reluctantly)
Solicit numbers from Sextus Vibius
alone. Word of Crixus' stunted
recovery is not to spread. I wish
only to discover his current value.

LUCRETIA (O.S.)

You would sell Crixus?

Batiatus turns to find Lucretia approaching with Naevia by her side.

BATIATUS

I would explore all avenues of
reason.

Batiatus waves Ashur away. Ashur nods compliance and moves off, a slight bend growing on his lips as he exits.

LUCRETIA

Which has flown if you consider
such a thing. Crixus will fight
again.

Batiatus tries to be gentle with his concerns.

BATIATUS

But will he ever be the man he was?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

That hits Lucretia hard, especially since she has had the same concern since her last disappointing lovemaking session with the man. Batiatus heads for his office. Lucretia follows, refusing to give up.

LUCRETIA

Give him time to heal, Quintus. He bleeds when pierced, as does any man.

BATIATUS

The crowds do not see a man. They see him a god, and we present him as such. Should that myth evaporate, so goes his worth.

LUCRETIA

Then we will find worth in another role. Surely his knowledge would aid instruction to the lower men?

BATIATUS

We already have a Doctore. The finest in any ludus.

LUCRETIA

(searching)
He could work beside you, then.

BATIATUS

Crixus has no head for numbers. The sword is his only purpose.

LUCRETIA

He is part of this family, Quintus!

Batiatus whirls, not caring for that.

BATIATUS

He is a fucking slave!

That stops her in her tracks. Batiatus composes himself, continues in a more measured tone.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

This house, this family, is a business, Lucretia. As much regret results from selling a gladiator like Crixus, when the time arrives, and it fucking will for them all, it is a necessity that must be swallowed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (cont'd)

(a beat)

The decision has yet to be made.
The man may still prove himself
fit.

He kisses her softly.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Turn your mind towards Ilithyia and
her friends. Win their favor, and
see our family name rise ever
higher.

Batiatus exits. OFF Lucretia, feeling the crushing weight of
possibly losing Crixus... and Naevia sharing the burden
silently by her side...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE/INT. MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Gladiators and Recruits train under Doctore's ever watchful
eye. Wooden swords CLASH, nearly missing CAMERA as it SLOWLY
PUSHES through the action: Agron spars with Varro. Rhaskos
against Duro. Hamilcar and a ND RECRUIT. Segovax spars with
Spartacus (two swords, no shield). CAMERA finally escapes
unscathed to find

CRIXUS,

fuming on a table in the mess hall, glaring at Spartacus.
Aching to return to training, sword hand absently clenching
and unclenching into a fist.

NAEVIA (O.S.)

(whispering)

Crixus.

He turns, spots Naevia standing in the shadows on the other
side of the gate.

CRIXUS

(voice kept low)

What are you doing?

(looking toward
square)

Doctore's gaze misses nothing.

NAEVIA

A risk made necessary by
unfortunate events.

Crixus eyes her with concern.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS

Did something happen to you?

NAEVIA

I am ever safe. But Dominus... he considers selling you to another master.

The words are as difficult to give as to receive.

CRIXUS

You are mistaken.

NAEVIA

Would that it were so. Ashur has been sent to market for herbs... and to question Vibius on his interest towards you.

CRIXUS

Vibius?! Lanista of shits and mongrels! The glory I have earned this ludus, and here is my fucking reward!

Naevia reaches through the bars and squeezes Crixus' arm.

NAEVIA

You must prove to Dominus that your time has not passed. And prove it quickly.

Naevia retreats, disappearing up the stairs to the villa.
OFF Crixus, smoldering...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

The Gladiators and exhausted Recruits continue to spar.
Doctore strides among them.

DOCTORE

To step upon the sands as a gladiator is the highest station a slave can pray for. Prove yourselves. Earn the mark of the brotherhood. And fight with honor.

He passes Spartacus, glaring at him as he goes. Spartacus ignores him, deflecting a series of blows from Segovax.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

Good. But you lower your shield
when you thrust. It leaves you open
from shoulder to neck. Again.

Segovax attacks, but his shield dips again. Spartacus cracks
him across the shoulder. Segovax grunts in pain.

CRIXUS

You strike a solid blow.

Spartacus turns to see Crixus approaching.

CRIXUS (cont'd)

Against an ill-trained fool who
taints the name of Gaul.

Segovax glares. Doctore glances over, says nothing.

SPARTACUS

He may be a fool. But he is one
that is fit to train.

(to Segovax)

Again.

Segovax steels himself, but Crixus isn't done yet.

CRIXUS

You doubt that I am fully healed? I
would show you otherwise.

Spartacus gauges Crixus, a faint smile bending his lips.

SPARTACUS

Doctore! Crixus offers a
demonstration, to the benefit of
the recruits! Shall I indulge?

Doctore glances up to

THE BALCONY

where Batiatus has appeared, chewing grapes. Lucretia and
Naevia are with him.

BATIATUS

(to Lucretia)

He believes himself ready.

Lucretia pushes aside her worry, her only concern preventing
Crixus from being sold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

As do I.

Batiatus considers, then nods permission to Doctore, curious of the outcome. TRAINING SQUARE

DOCTORE

Segovax! Your sword and shield.

Crixus grins as Segovax trots over, relinquishing his sword and shield to Crixus. He relishes the feel of them: old friends, reunited. Doctore cracks his whip.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Attend!

All eyes turn towards Spartacus and Crixus. PUSH IN on Spartacus as he extends invitation to Crixus.

SPARTACUS

Show me.

CRIXUS attacks with fierce determination. Spartacus is surprised by the fluidity of the assault. It's as if Crixus had never been injured.

THE BALCONY

Lucretia steps to the edge of the railing, her eyes dancing. Behind her, Naevia takes in her lover's display, hope swelling.

TRAINING SQUARE

Spartacus deflects and defends, not attempting to strike back. Instead he's letting Crixus overexert himself, much like Crixus did to him in the arena in episode 103. Crixus grunts from the effort, sweat springing from his brow.

SPARTACUS SUDDENLY COUNTERS,

reversing the attack. Crixus is driven back under the assault of Spartacus' twin swords. TIME SLOWS AND ACCELERATES. Crixus swings his sword. Spartacus bends, the blade contrailing the air an inch from his upturned face. He answers the attack, brutally sending Crixus to the sand.

THE BALCONY

Lucretia reacts. Naevia barely conceals her concern.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRAINING SQUARE

To prove a point, Spartacus calls out Crixus' missteps (a la Doctore in Ep. 102).

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
He attacks boldly to hasten
victory. Counter to proper
training.

Crixus brims with anger, surges forward. TIME SLOWS AND ACCELERATES as Spartacus counters, sending him toppling once more to the sand.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
Defeat is delivered not only by the
sword, but also the crowd.
(locks eyes with
Crixus)
Fall from their grace, and you may
never rise to former glories.

Crixus grunts in pain as he rises. Blood seeps from his stomach wound, having partially reopened.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
A true gladiator is taught to
embrace pain and suffering. To
fight until life flees from his
worthless body.

Crixus attacks, eyes wild with rage. Spartacus delivers a lightning quick combination. Crixus' sword and shield tumble from his grasp as he smashes to the sand, dazed, bloodied, and humiliated.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
Learn from this man. Or share his
fate.

Spartacus rears back with one of his swords, intent on bashing Crixus' skull in.

BATIATUS
Spartacus.

Spartacus pauses, glancing up at Batiatus.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
Return to training.

SPARTACUS
Dominus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spartacus bows slightly, turning his back on Crixus as he rejoins the Gladiators and Recruits. Crixus spits out a mouthful of blood, tries his best to stand, but his aggravated wounds are too much. He glances up to

THE BALCONY

Batiatus holds his gaze for a moment, then turns away, exiting into the villa. The crestfallen look on Lucretia's face says it all: Crixus has just doomed himself. Lucretia reluctantly joins Batiatus inside. Naevia shares a final, pained look with Crixus before following.

DOCTORE
(regrettably)
Rhaskos. Hamilcar. See him to
Medicus.

Rhaskos and Hamilcar help Crixus to his feet, WIPING US TO
--

EXT. MARKET - CAPUA - DAY

Ashur stands with VIBIUS.

ASHUR
A fine offer, good Vibius. I shall
hasten to present it to my master.

Vibius nods, exits. Ashur spots Solonius approaching, tries to avoid him.

SOLONIUS
(to Ashur)
A moment, slave.

Ashur turns, masking his hatred with a practiced smile.

SOLONIUS (cont'd)
You frequent the market absent
Batiatus?

ASHUR
I conduct important business on his
behalf.

SOLONIUS
Regarding the former Champion of
Capua?

That catches Ashur by surprise. Solonius clocks the reaction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR

I discuss no business of the like.

SOLONIUS

I would, if found in similar position. Crixus is champion in name only. He is but limbs, dangling from a skewered trunk. Your master would be well served pawning him off on a toad like Vibius.

ASHUR

(coldly)

Your concern for my master is well received.

SOLONIUS

My concern is not for him, but about him.

Solonius produces a pouch of coins.

SOLONIUS (cont'd)

Are your ears receptive?

Ashur eyes the pouch hungrily.

ASHUR

I cannot stop a free man from speech.

SOLONIUS

Were Batiatus to seek reprisal for offenses he believes I have made, I would have warning in advance.

Ashur considers that for a beat, bows slightly.

ASHUR

I am a villain.

(with a grin)

Yet not your villain. Seek another slave.

SOLONIUS

Loyalty can become a crushing weight, if not braced with proper support. When your back begins to break, you will find my shoulders broad and welcoming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Solonius exits with a warm smile. Ashur spits in disgust as he turns away, WIPING US TO --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Crixus sits alone on the table, his reopened wounds dressed with salve and herb. The fire has dimmed noticeably in his eyes.

SPARTACUS

You overreach.

Crixus glances over. Spartacus has appeared in the doorway.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

And here is the result.

CRIXUS

Do not address me as you would a recruit.

SPARTACUS

Then do not act like one.

CRIXUS

Words of import from the mighty Spartacus! Bringer of Rain! Slayer of Theokoles! As if you stood alone against him. Without my aid, you would have nothing. Not even your miserable life.

SPARTACUS

True. Yet here I stand. And there you sit.

A long beat.

CRIXUS

You know shit of being champion, of being a true brother. You are only playing at your part. And one day the game shall end.

SPARTACUS

Death comes to us all. Press me again, and you shall find yours.

Spartacus exits, leaving Crixus to nurse wounds to body and ego...

INT. CORRIDOR/TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Lucretia leads Ilithyia, CAECILIA (20s, beautiful), AEMILIA (20s, beautiful), and LICINIA (20s, blonde, tall and striking, she could be Ilithyia's sister) through the villa. The women are a force of nature. Think The Hills, circa 74 B.C.E. Licinia is obviously a step above in station -- and intelligence. Naevia and attending Slaves walk an appropriate distance behind.

LUCRETIA

Gratitude for joining us this evening. Ilithyia has spoken so very highly of you all, I feel as if we are old friends.

AEMILIA

You have us at disadvantage. Ilithyia neglected to mention she was acquainted with the wife of good Batiatus.

Ilithyia intercepts with a laugh.

ILITHYIA

I am sure I must have.

LICINIA

(to Lucretia)
She is quite the bitch, if you have not noticed.

CAECILIA

Which is why we love her so.

LUCRETIA

I grow rather fond of her myself.

Lucretia forces a smile as she leads the women into --

THE TRICLINIUM

A spread of delicacies and wine await. An attempt to impress.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)

Come, let us sip and feast.

AEMILIA

I could use a cup of wine to wet the tongue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The women rest on couches as Naevia and Slaves fill their cups, offer trays of food.

ILITHYIA
You could be drowning, and gurgle
the same.

CAECILIA
(sipping wine)
Mmm. Is this Sestian?

LUCRETIA
Falernian.

The women titter in appreciation.

AEMILIA
She is trying hard, is she not?

ILITHYIA
Only because I have told her how
important you are to me.

LICINIA
Yes, we all love each other and
have orgies under the new moon.
(to Lucretia)
Now tell us stories!

CAECILIA
Yes, tell us everything about this
horrid place!

ILITHYIA
She means the ludus below.

CAECILIA
Do I need an interpreter?

ILITHYIA
Apparently.

LICINIA
Do be quiet and let her speak!
(to Lucretia)
How do you live among such beasts?

LUCRETIA
My husband sees them well tamed.

LICINIA
I pray not fully.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAECILIA

Licina!

The women laugh.

LUCRETIA

Some instinct remains. So they may yet unleash their savagery in the arena.

CAECILIA

I would go insane here! Surrounded by these animals, high atop this mountain. Would you not prefer the city, surrounded by real people?

LUCRETIA

I find we are perfectly located. I need only step onto the balcony and all of Capua kneels before me.

LICINIA

Well stated.

AEMILIA

But are you not bored? Up here, all alone? Nothing but slaves and beasts, not even children to occupy
--

She freezes, shooting a glance at Ilithyia as she realizes she spoke out of turn. Lucretia remains calm, tries her best to ignore the remark. Ilithyia jumps in, steering the conversation in a more productive manner.

ILITHYIA

Boredom? Impossible with so many distractions!

LUCRETIA

I stay quite occupied. Each day brings with it opportunity. Yesterday, in fact, six new recruits began their training. One of whom fights under Ilithyia's patronage.

An uproar of giggles and shocked, titillated laughter.

LICINIA

Ilithyia! Claudius gave you approval?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA
 (conspiratorially)
 He does not know. A few coins,
 parceled from my allowance.

CAECILIA
 He will kill you when he finds out!

ILITHYIA
 And I will kill the first who
 tells!

More shrieking and laughter. Ilithyia basks in the attention.

LICINIA
 A gladiator of your own! May we see
 him?

LUCRETIA
 Of course, but he is not yet a
 gladiator. He must pass the final
 test before earning the mark of
 Batiatus.

CAECILIA
 Oh. He is only a slave, then?

That dampens the mood. Ilithyia glowers. Lucretia realizes her mistake, tries to cover.

LUCRETIA
 For the moment, but --

AEMILIA
 I would lay eyes upon a real
 gladiator.

LICINIA
 Yes! A champion! Bring Spartacus
 up!

CAECILIA
 Spartacus! Yes! You must!

Lucretia turns to Ilithyia, not sure what to do. Ilithyia's turn to force a smile.

ILITHYIA
 Bring the Champion. Let us all
 revel in his presence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ilithyia sips her wine. OFF Lucretia, smiling politely as her evening slowly crumbles...

INT. BATH - BATTIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Spartacus as he's scraped by a Slave. PULL BACK to REVEAL other Gladiators receiving the same treatment. Lower men and the Recruits scrape themselves. Spartacus glances across the room at Varro, being scraped, eyes downcast.

SEGOVAX (O.S.)

Gratitude.

Spartacus glances over to find Segovax has appeared.

SEGOVAX

For your aid in my training today.

Spartacus ignores him, his eyes falling instead on Crixus as he enters. He sits with a slight wince of pain, takes up a scraper to attend his own skin. No special treatment for the fallen.

SEGOVAX (cont'd)

I would be eager to hear any advice, to further my cause.

Spartacus replies, never taking his eyes off of Crixus.

SPARTACUS

Your cause?

SEGOVAX

Victories in the arena, and freedom.

The men chuckle. Spartacus does not.

SPARTACUS

Forsake thoughts of freedom, and the life you once had beyond these walls. Accept your fate... or be destroyed by spectres of a past never to return.

Crixus locks eyes with him. A Guard appears.

GUARD

Spartacus. You are summoned.

Crixus watches as Spartacus exits. He passes the glowering Gaul, WIPING US TO --

INT. TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

TIGHT ON a well manicured HAND as it slowly caresses a broad, familiar chest.

LICINIA (O.S.)

He stands as Mars, ready for war.

WIDEN to REVEAL Spartacus, shackled, standing proud before the awe-struck women. Licinia touches his chest with near orgasmic wonder. Aemilia and Caecilia sip wine, loving their "display." Lucretia eyes the women, pleased that they fawn over Spartacus. Ilithyia stands off to the side, seething. Several GUARDS are in the background.

LICINIA

Is there truth to the legends? That gladiators share the blood of the gods?

ILITHYIA

The mighty Crixus, most certainly.

Ilithyia sips her wine, knowing she's brought up a delicate subject in mixed company.

CAECILIA

Now there was a man! Truly blessed by the gods!

AEMILIA

When will we see him in the arena again?

LUCRETIA

Soon.

Lucretia tries to hide the pain of the lie.

LICINIA

What of you, Spartacus? Are you a blessing to us?

SPARTACUS

To some. To others, a curse.

Spartacus shifts his eyes to Ilithyia. Lucretia tenses.

ILITHYIA

The duality of his kind. Admired as a gladiator. Yet despised as a slave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Licinia stands entranced.

LICINIA

He is much more than a common
slave. You can feel it radiating
from his flesh...

(to Lucretia)

I have heard tale of a champion's
blood possessing many restorative
powers.

AEMILIA

A few drops in a glass of wine is
said to make a man hard for days!

LUCRETIA

Such are the legends.

LICINIA

I would test them for myself, if I
could?

LUCRETIA

Of course. We will send messenger
with a vial --

LICINIA

I would have it now.

Aemilia and Caecilia titter excitedly. Lucretia hesitates,
but knows to refuse the request would be unwise.

LUCRETIA

Guard. Your knife.

A Guard comes forward and hands Lucretia his knife.

ILITHYIA

May I have the honor?

Lucretia hesitates, reluctantly hands Ilithyia the knife.

LUCRETIA

Take care not to cut too deep.

ILITHYIA

The legend does call for the blood
of a dead gladiator, does it not?

She traces the knife over his chest, almost erotically.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
 But such details should not concern
 us. Spartacus will die soon
 enough...

She moves the blade up to his neck. Lucretia tenses.
 Spartacus doesn't even flinch. He won't give her the
 satisfaction.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
 To the roar of the crowd.

She moves the knife down in a quick motion, opening a cut on
 his chest. She presses her wine cup to his flesh, capturing
 the trickling blood.

LICINIA
 I do not believe he will ever fall
 in the arena. He is a god among
 men.

ILITHYIA
 He is nothing but a Thracian dog.
 His treachery dishonored Rome.

SPARTACUS
 It is your husband who bears the
 dishonor.

LUCRETIA
 Spartacus!

SPARTACUS
 He abandoned defenseless women and
 children. Left to be raped and
 murdered.

LUCRETIA
 Guards!

She motions for the Guards to remove him. The girls titter
 as Spartacus is roughly escorted out.

AEMILIA
 What a bold tongue!

LUCRETIA
 Apologies.

ILITHYIA
 Were he my slave, I would have him
 crucified!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Licina takes the cup of Spartacus' blood.

LICINIA
For what? Speaking the truth? We
have all heard the rumors about
your husband.

Ilithyia reddens. The girls titter.

LICINIA (cont'd)
(to Lucretia)
The hour grows late, and I am
expected.

CAECILIA
(rising)
Gratitude for a most interesting
evening.

LICINIA
One that begs a repeat soon.

She kisses Lucretia on the cheek and exits with Aemilia and Caecilia, both barely able to contain their laughter over Ilithyia's embarrassment. Ilithyia watches them go, seething.

LUCRETIA
Apologies.

Ilithyia brightens, masking her anger.

ILITHYIA
None required. You will soon learn
that women of note have a rabid
taste for the embarrassment of
their friends.

LUCRETIA
I would not see mine treated so.

Ilithyia smiles politely, her mind on other matters.

ILITHYIA
May I have words with Segovax
before I take my leave? I wish to
bid my man good fortune in the days
to follow.

LUCRETIA
Come. I will see to it...

As the women move off, their gowns WIPING US TO --

OMITTED

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

DICE blast against a stone wall, followed by CHEERS. PULL BACK to REVEAL Varro, Hamilcar, Rhaskos, and a knot of other Gladiators enthralled in bones and dice.

VARRO
My fortune returns!

Varro scoops up his winnings.

SPARTACUS (O.S.)
Varro.

Varro looks up to find Spartacus hovering above him. Blood still trickles from the cut across his chest.

VARRO
I am of a winning mind. Save your words of caution.

SPARTACUS
I am not here for words. I am here for dice.

VARRO
You and dice?

SPARTACUS
I am of a mood tonight. I would have distraction. And coin.

The men laugh. Varro indicates for Spartacus to sit.

VARRO
The rules, then.

SPARTACUS
Should I need instruction, I will ask.

Varro shrugs -- this will be easy. He hands Spartacus the dice.

VARRO
Roll, Champion.

Spartacus does... and wins! The men explode into laughter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RHASKOS

Taking coin from Varro! Easy as dropping shit!

More LAUGHTER. Varro throws down another wager. OFF Spartacus as he gathers the bones for another roll, intent on taking all of Varro's money...

INT. TROPHY ROOM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Segovax, in shackles, is led in by Guards. Ilithyia awaits.

ILITHYIA

Leave us.

The Guards exit.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)

Do you know who I am, slave?

SEGOVAX

Apologies. I do not.

Ilithyia circles him, her eyes appreciating.

ILITHYIA

I am your Domina. My coin pays for your training. Your water. Food. The very air you breathe. Survive to receive the mark, and you will become my gladiator. My champion.

SEGOVAX

(a slight bow)
Domina.

ILITHYIA

Please me, and the rewards will be substantial. Wine... women... even freedom, perhaps.

Segovax reacts. Ilithyia picks up on it.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)

You desire such a thing? Freedom?

SEGOVAX

Yes, Domina.

Ilithyia considers that, wheels turning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA

There is something I desire. See it attended to, and your freedom will be secured...

A dark smile bends Ilithyia's lips. OFF the moment...

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Batiatus rages through the atrium with Lucretia. Naevia follows.

BATIATUS

Spartacus should never have been summoned!

LUCRETIA

I had little choice.

BATIATUS

Ilithyia and the man must be kept separate. Throwing them together invites calamity.

LUCRETIA

The risk bore proper fruit. Licinia intimates another visit.

That gets Batiatus' attention.

BATIATUS

Spartacus her purpose?

LUCRETIA

Most certainly.

BATIATUS

Then we shall accommodate. Her cousin good Crassus owns the fucking heavens, even if he is not currently favored by his fellows in the senate.

(kissing her)

Your efforts raise us ever higher.

LUCRETIA

And how do yours fare?

(delicately)

Have you received offers for Crixus?

Batiatus knows where this is headed, tries to avoid it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

I am to meet with Vibius tomorrow.

LUCRETIA

Vibius?! His ludus is in Damascus!

Naevia averts her eyes, for fear her grief will expose her.

BATIATUS

Crixus will fare better in the smaller venues, until he is healed.

LUCRETIA

(a beat)

Tomorrow, then?

BATIATUS

His glory fades. I would not see it extinguished beneath our roof.

OFF Naevia in the background, the news a knife in her heart...

INT. GATE - MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Crixus stares in shock through the iron bars of the gate.

CRIXUS

Damascus?

ADJUST to find Naevia on the other side, fighting to hold back the tears.

NAEVIA

Dominus meets with Vibius tomorrow.

Crixus tries to keep his composure. But the reality of his last night in the ludus finally sets in, his last night with Naevia. He forces a smile.

CRIXUS

I have never seen Damascus. Do you think I shall like it?

NAEVIA

You cannot go.

CRIXUS

The decision is made. Even Domina doubts me. I see it in her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NAEVIA
Then convince her otherwise.

CRIXUS
My words carry no weight.

NAEVIA
I do not speak of words.

Crixus realizes what she's asking.

CRIXUS
(a beat)
You would have me do this?

NAEVIA
I would have you stay.

Naevia touches his face through the bars, tears finally cresting her cheeks. OFF the sacrifice...

INT. MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Varro sits alone, sullenly stabbing at his gruel. A POUCH filled with coins lands on the table next to him. He looks up to find Spartacus.

SPARTACUS
The coin you lost to me.

VARRO
Which makes it yours.

Varro slides the pouch back to Spartacus.

SPARTACUS
You are a fool.

VARRO
And you have thrown dice before.

SPARTACUS
I turned from such things years ago. For my wife.

Varro knows the mention of Sura is not easily made. He turns his eyes away, rising.

VARRO
Then you are a better man than I.

Spartacus grabs his arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

Do not forget why you are here,
Varro.

VARRO

Remove your hand.

SPARTACUS

You dishonor your family. You
dishonor your own wife --

VARRO

My wife is a whore!

Varro wrenches his arm free. Gladiators at the other tables
turn at the outburst. A beat. The fire drains from Varro's
eyes.

VARRO (cont'd)

(soft)

She carries another man's child.

Spartacus absorbs that.

SPARTACUS

How did this come to be?

VARRO

A friend, from the marketplace. She
claims he forced his way onto her.

Spartacus hardens.

SPARTACUS

And you find fault with her?

VARRO

She did not fight as she should
have.

SPARTACUS

Had you not left to pay your debts,
she would not have had to.

(a beat)

She lives, Varro. You may yet hold
her in your arms. A thought a
decent man would cherish.

Spartacus walks away, leaving the money. OFF Varro,
conflicted...

INT. TROPHY ROOM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Lucretia waits in her robe, her face troubled by what's to come. Naevia escorts Crixus into the room, behind her. Naevia shares a worried, charged look with him before exiting.

LUCRETIA
(without turning)
My husband is at market, on
business concerning you. He
believes your day may have passed.

CRIXUS
And you?

LUCRETIA
I pray he is mistaken.

She turns to face him, eyes filled with regret -- and doubt. He moves towards her, his strength growing with each step.

CRIXUS
And the gods? Do they answer your
prayers?

LUCRETIA
They are silent.

CRIXUS
Then let us crack the heavens...
and gain their attention...

He pulls her into a kiss, rough and hard. Lucretia gasps. He spins her around, forcing her against the wall, his breath hot against her neck.

CRIXUS (cont'd)
Remove any doubt... that my day has
passed...

He RIPS OFF HER GOWN, pulling her hair back as he enters her hard. She gasps in pain and ecstasy, her face twisting in pleasure. MOVE OFF the animalistic display to find

NAEVIA

watching from the shadows at the entrance. She turns away, tears staining her cheeks, knowing she's done the right thing. Yet still feeling the sting of it. OFF her pain...

OMITTED

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Crixus, uneasy from being with Lucretia, averts his eyes as Naevia leads him back to the ludus. A long beat.

NAEVIA
She seemed... pleased.

CRIXUS
Naevia --

NAEVIA
You did what you had to. What I asked you to.

CRIXUS
Dominus is already at market.
Speaking with Vibius.

NAEVIA
There is nothing that cannot be undone.
(biting back the tears)
You are a good man. The gods will not see you treated so.

CRIXUS
(bitterly)
They favor Spartacus now. They give no shit for me.

He continues on. She watches for a moment, praying he's wrong. She follows, WIPING US TO --

INT. BATH - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

A few GLADIATORS exit, naked, leaving Spartacus alone. He sits in his subligaria, gently scraping the wound he received from Ilithyia. SLOW PUSH IN as he dips the scraper in water for rinsing, puts it to his chest again. COME TO REST close on Spartacus' face, concentrating on the task.

A TOWEL

suddenly drops around his neck and tightens, cutting off his air. REVEAL SEGOVAX behind him, muscles straining as he pulls the towel taut. Spartacus drops the scraper, struggles, manages to slam an elbow back. The jolt stuns Segovax, loosening his grip. Spartacus stumbles to the floor, gasping. He spots

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE SCRAPER

and lunges for it, but Segovax gets the towel around his neck again before he can retrieve it. Spartacus struggles, veins bulging, sputtering for breath.

SEGOVAX
(soft, sincere)
Forgive me, champion...

Segovax tightens his grip even more. The rope digs into Spartacus' neck, drawing blood. His eyes lose focus as he weakens and -- WHAM! Segovax is slammed off him by

CRIXUS

who has just entered. Spartacus collapses to the floor, choking, gulping air in ragged breaths.

SEGOVAX

recovers, snatching up Spartacus' fallen scraper and attacking. Crixus attempts to avoid the makeshift blade, is only partially successful. Segovax swings. Crixus blocks the blow, catching Segovax's wrist. A test of strength ensues as Crixus tries to force the scraper out of Segovax's grasp.

SEGOVAX PUNCHES CRIXUS

in his stomach wound, reopening it once again. Crixus grunts in pain, but refuses to give in. The scraper finally clatters from Segovax's grasp. Crixus' fists rain down on Segovax. One last blow sends BLOODY TEETH flying. Segovax crumbles to the floor.

CRIXUS FIGHTS FOR BREATH,

favoring his reopened wound. Spartacus, regaining his senses, tries to speak.

SPARTACUS
You kill... a fellow Gaul... to
save a man you hate?

CRIXUS
I do not save Spartacus. I save a
brother... from an unworthy end.

Crixus draws himself up proudly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS (cont'd)
 You share the mark... You have
 earned a glorious death... at the
 hands of a gladiator.

OFF Spartacus, owing his enemy his life...

INT. TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

A boiling Batiatus sweeps through the villa with Lucretia.
 Ashur and Naevia are in tow.

BATIATUS
 I leave these walls for a moment
 and a fucking recruit tries to kill
 Spartacus?! Ilithyia's own fucking
 man?!

LUCRETIA
 (seizing the
 opportunity)
 And he would have succeeded, were
 it not for Crixus. His day has not
 passed.

Batiatus considers that with a frown, growls at Ashur.

BATIATUS
 Send notice to Vibius. Crixus is no
 longer for sale.

Ashur struggles to mask his disappointment. Naevia, her joy.

ASHUR
 I fear terms were already agreed
 upon --

BATIATUS
 Fuck the terms! Crixus has proven
 his worth today. Should Vibius have
 issue, he may give reason to my
 cock.

ASHUR
 Dominus.

Ashur slinks away, passing Ilithyia being led in by Guards.
 Batiatus hisses to Lucretia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

(under breath)

The snake arrives, walking as if human.

ILITHYIA

I pray I have not missed the test?

LUCRETIA

Delayed, due to most unfortunate events.

BATIATUS

Spartacus, Champion of Capua, was attacked unawares in the baths.

Ilithyia feigns concern.

ILITHYIA

Attacked?

LUCRETIA

By your recruit Segovax.

ILITHYIA

How unfortunate.

A SHRIEK OF AGONY sounds from the training square outside.

BATIATUS

For your man, yes.

LUCRETIA

He had to be punished, of course.

Ilithyia's eyes betray actual concern as Batiatus and Lucretia lead her out onto the balcony.

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

Agron, Duro and the Recruits are constructing the training bridge for the final test. Ilithyia steps out with Batiatus and Lucretia, her face decaying as her eyes fall on

SEGOVAX

in the training square, being NAILED TO A CROSS by Hamilcar and Rhaskos. Doctor, Spartacus, and the Gladiators bear witness. Segovax screams, the pain driving him to near insanity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

looks up at Ilithyia, locking eyes with her in contempt, his neck still raw from the attack.

THE BALCONY

Ilithyia stands horrified.

ILITHYIA
Spartacus yet lives.

BATIATUS
Yet.

LUCRETIA
Your man would not speak as to his reason, even when parted with his cock. Did he give any sign of cause when you met with him last night?

Ilithyia forces a smile, giving nothing away.

ILITHYIA
No. It is a mystery.

She turns away. Lucretia eyes her, well versed enough in lies to know when presented with one. THE TRAINING SQUARE

Crixus joins Spartacus. They stand in silence, not looking at each other as Hamilcar and Rhaskos raise the cross. Segovax groans, nearly unconscious.

CRIXUS
I will regain my position,
champion.

SPARTACUS
(a beat, not
looking)
I welcome the attempt.

CAMERA RISES over the back of the cross, looking down at the two rivals. Separated by the vertical beam. Forever joined together in death and brotherhood.

BLACKOUT.

END OF EPISODE

