

Shadow Games

Written by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

SPARTACUS, reinstated from the Pits, spars with HAMILCAR in a rotating drill with the other GLADIATORS. Bruises and scrapes still mar his flesh, but he trains with focus and determination. DOCTORE cracks his whip.

DOCTORE

Switch!

The Gladiators switch partners. Every man is drenched in sweat, lips cracked from lack of water. The drought has taken its toll. VARRO grins, crossing sword and shield with Spartacus. After a few beats, Doctore cracks his whip.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Switch!

CRIXUS moves into position opposite Spartacus, attacking. Spartacus tries to keep a steady pace, but Crixus strikes hard, pressing beyond the exercise. Doctore cracks his whip.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Switch!

GNAEUS, exhausted and winded, moves to face Spartacus -- but Crixus doesn't give way. He continues to press, catching Spartacus by surprise. Spartacus stumbles back, barely deflecting the blows. Crixus raises his practice sword to crack Spartacus' skull.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Crixus!

Crixus freezes. Doctore steps closer, displeased.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Did you not hear the command?

CRIXUS

Apologies, Doctore. I hope I did not frighten the rabbit.

Snickers from the men. Doctore glares.

DOCTORE

The games of the Magistrate approach. Listen carefully to my instructions, and every man chosen will see victory in the arena.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gnaeus swoons from the heat in the background, collapses to the ground.

DOCTORE (cont'd)  
Perhaps not every man.

PIETROS rushes over to Gnaeus with a skin of water.

DOCTORE (cont'd)  
Save rations for men who deserve them. Spartacus! Varro! Remove him to the infirmary.

Spartacus and Varro carry Gnaeus out of the square. Doctore cracks his whip, commanding the rest of the men to continue.

DOCTORE (cont'd)  
Resume!

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Spartacus and Varro dump Gnaeus on an examining table. The MEDICUS comes over as Spartacus and Varro move away.

SPARTACUS  
We nearly die of thirst and yet water is withheld.

VARRO  
Batiatus lacks the coin to purchase more than a few drops. Especially since losing a fortune in the Pits.

Spartacus darkens with guilt.

SPARTACUS  
Because of me.

VARRO  
You did what you had to. If you had died as promised, Batiatus' purse would be overflowing, but the man himself dead. And no one to find your wife.

SPARTACUS  
And if he does, how will I pay to wrest her from the Syrian? I have no coin, nor favor in the arena.

VARRO  
The gods will provide.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

I place no value in them.

VARRO

Perhaps now's a good time to start.

Varro grins as he moves off. Spartacus frowns, following, his body WIPING US TO --

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

BATIATUS stands in the middle of his empty reflecting pool, his arms outstretched to the blazing sky above. Several SLAVES stand in the background.

BATIATUS

Rain! By Jupiter's cock, will you fucking rain!

LUCRETIA (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Batiatus turns to find LUCRETIA striding up with a scroll in hand. NAEVIA hustles in her wake.

BATIATUS

Praying.

LUCRETIA

Blaspheming.

BATIATUS

The two are narrowly separated in these trying times.

LUCRETIA

Perhaps the gap widens...

She holds out the scroll. Batiatus steps out of the pool, takes it.

BATIATUS

More creditors, threatening action?

LUCRETIA

Something of more cheerful note, just delivered...

Lucretia beams, barely containing herself as Batiatus scans the message. Batiatus brightens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

From Magistrate Calavius! He's coming here to personally select men for his games!

LUCRETIA

Games to appease the gods and end the drought! The biggest games since Theokoles bested a hundred men in the arena!

BATIATUS

But why come himself? Unless...

LUCRETIA

The Primus.

BATIATUS

To secure the main event at these games... We would be the talk of the Republic.

LUCRETIA

He arrives within the hour.

BATIATUS

(to Slaves)  
Prepare food. And gather all the water we have.

LUCRETIA

Your robe...

Lucretia goes to Batiatus, concerned. He glances down to see BLOOD has seeped through the side of his robe where the assassin slashed him in 104.

BATIATUS

It's nothing.

LUCRETIA

(to Naevia)  
Fetch the Medicus.

BATIATUS

Lucretia --

LUCRETIA

I would have word with the Magistrate about this. Those men nearly killed you, an honest citizen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

In a dishonest place. No, we won't concern the Magistrate with such things, not with the Primus in the balance. I'll tend to the matter myself.

OFF Batiatus, darkening at the thought...

EXT. MARKET ALLEY - CAPUA - DAY

THUMP! A CHUNK OF FLESH lands on a table at a market stall. It's the rotted, decaying, maggoty shoulder of one of the assassins from 104, bearing the distinct BRAND. The flesh was just tossed by

ASHUR,

who glares at MARCELLUS, a greasy merchant of questionable repute. BARCA looms behind Marcellus, face filled with impending violence.

ASHUR

That was the mark on one of the slaves who tried to kill Batiatus. Who is the master?

Marcellus glances at it in disgust.

MARCELLUS

The mark is unknown to me.

ASHUR

Perhaps a closer look...

Barca slams Marcellus' face into the maggoty flesh, holds it there.

ASHUR (cont'd)

Details of such craftsmanship should not be viewed in haste.

MARCELLUS

(spitting maggots)  
I...may have seen a similar mark...

OFF Ashur's murderous grin...

INT. BEDCHAMBERS - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Lucretia finishes helping Batiatus into his finest robes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

Do they yet fit? They feel as if they've shrunk about the middle.

LUCRETIA

You adorn them like a god.

BATIATUS

I would be out of them... and deep into you...

He kisses her. She laughs, but can't help feel the passion rising as his hand slips down between her legs. Naevia enters, breaking the moment.

NAEVIA

Apologies. Magistrate Calavius arrives.

LUCRETIA

Our fortunes rise, along with your cock.

BATIATUS

Stay wet. I'll make it rain presently...

As they sweep out...

INT. ATRIUM/TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Batiatus and Lucretia enter, beaming. MAGISTRATE TITUS CALAVIUS stands with his back to them, speaking with someone we can't see. Calavius' GUARDS wait in the background.

BATIATUS

Magistrate! You honor us with your presence!

Calavius turns. Batiatus' smile falters as he sees the man the Magistrate was conversing with: SOLONIUS, his rival.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Good Batiatus! I was just telling Solonius how I knew your father. Now there was a true Roman.

SOLONIUS

A great man, none of his like to follow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Batiatus smiles through the obvious slight, bowing slightly to Calavius.

BATIATUS

I shall attempt to fill your needs  
as he would have.

Batiatus motions them towards the triclinium, filled with food and water. They talk as they stroll.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

To business then. As you well know,  
the drought has parched the city to  
near madness. We've tried  
everything to tempt the sky to  
tears, even the Hecatombe.

SOLONIUS

A hundred cattle sacrificed, and  
yet not a drop.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Because the gods do not want the  
blood of bulls. They want the blood  
of men! Good Solonius has been kind  
enough to lend hand in organizing  
games to appease their appetite.

SOLONIUS

It will be a Sine Missione. No  
draw. No mercy shown.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Only the finest gladiators will be  
invited to participate.

BATIATUS

Only the finest are offered in the  
house of Batiatus. Come, examine my  
wares. And marvel at their  
superiority.

Batiatus shoots Solonius a wry grin as he motions them out to the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY/TRAINING SQUARE - DAY

Calavius and Solonius step out onto the balcony. Batiatus and Lucretia follow, with Naevia ever in tow. Doctore continues putting the men through their paces beneath the setting sun in the square below.

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CONTINUED:

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS  
An impressive selection, rivaling  
that of good Solonius himself.

SOLONIUS  
And yet I hold the Primus.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS  
Half. Your opponent still to be  
chosen.

Batiatus shares an excited look with Lucretia.

BATIATUS  
If you hope to appease the gods,  
you must have one upon the sands!  
Crixus, the Champion of Capua!

Batiatus indicates Crixus, sparring with Hamilcar, muscles  
rippling in the light of the setting sun.

BATIATUS (cont'd)  
He will gladly meet anyone Solonius  
has to offer.

Solonius' face splits into a grin. Exactly what he wanted to  
hear.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS  
Excellent! It will truly be a  
contest between legends!

BATIATUS  
Legends?

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS  
Did I fail to mention? Good  
Solonius has secured Theokoles for  
the Primus!

LUCRETIA  
(stunned)  
Theokoles?

SOLONIUS  
I managed to coax him to our fair  
city, at great expense.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS  
With our gratitude. If the gods  
fail to grant us rain for such a  
tribute, then we are surely cursed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

I fear the gods will be displeased.  
The match is unbalanced. Only one  
man has ever stood against  
Theokoles and lived.

Solonius looks down at Spartacus as he trains below.

SOLONIUS

What if Crixus were joined by your  
man Spartacus? His death was fated  
in execution, yet he refused to own  
it. And cost me four men in its  
defiance.

Batiatus struggles to find an honorable way to back out.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Your debts are well known,  
Batiatus. Even if you lose the men,  
the purse is enough to hold your  
creditors at bay, for a moment. Of  
course if you'd prefer to sit out  
these games, and others to  
follow...

BATIATUS

No. I will set my men to the task.

Lucretia stiffens in shock. Solonius grins in satisfaction.  
Batiatus glares at him as he steps to the railing and  
addresses his men.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

My titans! Pause, and hear glorious  
news!

Spartacus, Crixus, and the other men look to Batiatus.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Magistrate Titus Calavius has  
invited our best men to fight in  
his Primus! Crixus! Step forward!

Crixus grins as he proudly steps forward. Of course he was  
asked to fight. For a moment, his eyes meet Naevia's on the  
balcony above. She quickly looks away.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Spartacus! Step forward.

A murmur of surprise ripples through the Gladiators. Crixus  
glares as Spartacus steps forward, equally surprised.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (cont'd)  
You have both been chosen. You will  
fight as one... against Theokoles,  
the Shadow of Death!

The men react in shock and excitement. PUSH IN ON SPARTACUS  
as the weight of the matter settles upon him...

INT. MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Crixus glares at Spartacus as he eats his evening gruel.  
Varro frowns as he passes by with Spartacus.

VARRO  
You two will make a fine couple.

SPARTACUS  
I would rather fight without him.

VARRO  
And die the same.

SPARTACUS  
This Theokoles. The legends cannot  
be true.

VARRO  
He has been cut a thousand times in  
the arena, and has never fallen. I  
fear you would have been safer in  
the Pits.

They sit to eat. Spartacus eyes Crixus across the mess hall,  
considering their chances.

SPARTACUS  
If we were to win, how large would  
be the purse?

VARRO  
Large enough to wrest ten wives  
from the Syrian.

OFF Spartacus, eyeing Crixus as he considers the  
possibilities...

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Doctore follows Batiatus as he fumes, Lucretia at his side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

You send them to certain death. Let me fight in their stead.

LUCRETIA

An excellent suggestion.

DOCTORE

I owe Theokoles a debt of pain.

BATIATUS

You were not requested!

Batiatus softens.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

No one has forgotten how bravely you fought against Theokoles, old friend.

DOCTORE

Yet without victory.

BATIATUS

You stand the only man ever to face him in the arena and live. That in itself is victory.

Batiatus sees Ashur and Barca approaching.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Set your purpose on training Crixus and Spartacus for the match.

DOCTORE

I fear no amount will keep them from the Shadow's grasp.

BATIATUS

Then prepare them for a glorious death.

Batiatus motions for Ashur and Barca to follow him. OFF Lucretia, concern for Crixus welling in her eyes...

INT. OFFICE CHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Ashur and Barca follow Batiatus into his office chamber.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR

The brand belongs to Remus, a slave trader plying wares north of the city.

BATIATUS

Remus? The name holds no recognition.

ASHUR

Nor to me. Yet if I were to purchase a slave, intent on foul designs...

BATIATUS

It would be from outside Capua, to avoid simple discovery.

(to Barca)

Find Remus and return with him. I would have conversation.

OFF Batiatus, darkening with the promise of retribution...

INT. STORAGE AREA/MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON a skin of water being passed through the bars of the gate separating the mess hall from the storage area leading up to the villa.

CRIXUS (O.S.)

Water?

POP WIDE to reveal Naevia on the other side of the gate.

NAEVIA

From the Domina. To help with your training.

She turns to go.

CRIXUS

Stay a moment.

NAEVIA

To what purpose?

CRIXUS

Does there need to be one?

She takes him in, uncertain of how she feels towards the man... but feeling nonetheless. He takes her in with longing -- and something very much approaching love.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NAEVIA

(soft)  
You should not look at me like  
that.

CRIXUS

I try with all my might not to.  
Yet I am weak.

She locks eyes with him, the air charged between them. With difficulty she pulls her gaze away from him.

NAEVIA

(soft)  
Sleep, then. And regain your  
strength.

She quietly slips back up the stairs to the ludus. OFF

INT. CORRIDOR/CRIXUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Crixus returns from the baths wrapped in a towel. He steps into his cell and freezes, tensing. Spartacus sits half in the shadows on his bed.

SPARTACUS

I seek no quarrel.

CRIXUS

Your presence states otherwise.

Spartacus rises.

SPARTACUS

We have had our differences. I own my part in them. Yet if we are to defeat Theokoles --

CRIXUS

We?

(laughs)  
There is no such thing in the arena. Only the Champion of Capua. And a Thracian dog undeserving the name of gladiator.

Spartacus' jaw tightens.

SPARTACUS

You believe you can slay the giant?  
Alone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS  
As I always stand.

SPARTACUS  
This time you do not.

CRIXUS  
If Theokoles falls, the glory will  
be mine.

SPARTACUS  
And if we do not come to common  
ground, the death shared will be  
ours.

Spartacus exits. OFF Crixus, considering his words... and  
not caring for them.

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAWN

The MORNING SUN blazes as Ashur hobbles along with Barca  
towards the main gate, accompanied by TWO GUARDS. Ashur  
snorts at Spartacus and Crixus warming in the square,  
separate and far from a team.

ASHUR  
As if they stand chance against  
Theokoles.

BARCA  
Perhaps the gods will favor them.

ASHUR  
And perhaps I shall sprout wings  
and flutter off. The odds lay a  
thousand to one against them.

Barca eyes Crixus across the square.

BARCA  
No man has ever won betting against  
Crixus. I would lay coin towards  
their victory.

ASHUR  
A fool's wager, happily received.

Ashur hobbles off. Barca glares after him, nods to the  
GUARDS to unlock the gate. Pietros hustles up.

PIETROS  
You leave without words.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARCA

None to give.

PIETROS

(hushed)

Each time you step beyond these walls, I fear the things you are asked to do. What if --

BARCA

Grab hold of your cock and be a man!

Pietros registers hurt. Barca softens.

BARCA (cont'd)

I do what I must, Pietros. I'll return soon. Mind the birds.

He kisses Pietros softly, exits. Doctore enters the square, calls for Pietros.

DOCTORE

Pietros! Weapons!

Pietros hustles over to the weapons barrel. Gnaeus, looking pale and dehydrated, gives the boy a leering grin with cracked lips. Pietros ignores him, drawing two practice swords. He hustles the weapons PAST FRAME, WIPING US TO --

INT. ATRIUM/TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Batiatus follows Lucretia as she strides through the atrium. Naevia follows.

BATIATUS

Ilithyia?

LUCRETIA

She comes on my invitation.

BATIATUS

Now isn't the time to be entertaining that spoiled little bitch.

LUCRETIA

Now is the perfect time. Her father Albinus holds the Magistrate's ear. If he were to place a word in it, perhaps Crixus could be replaced in the Primus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

Albinus could place a thousand, to  
no result.

Lucretia whirls on him, her frustration boiling over.

LUCRETIA

Solonius maneuvered you.

BATIATUS

With the aid of the Magistrate!  
Refuse and we would quickly find  
ourselves excluded from the arena  
altogether.

LUCRETIA

And if Crixus falls? Who will be  
our champion? Who will the crowds  
clamor to see from the house of  
Batiatus? Spartacus, the thing from  
the Pits?

ILITHYIA enters from the far side of the atrium, escorted in  
by Batiatus' Guards. Several BODY SLAVES are in tow.

BATIATUS

(low, to Lucretia)  
Your guest arrives. Do not broach  
the subject with her.  
(brightly)  
Ilithyia! We are well honored by  
your presence.

ILITHYIA

I would trade honor for water. The  
heat is a thing living, crawling  
down the throat like a snake of  
fire.

LUCRETIA

Come, let us quench your thirst.

BATIATUS

(to Ilithyia)  
I must attend to business of the  
games. I leave you in loving hands.

Batiatus moves off, his gracious smile dropping into an  
annoyed frown once his back is turned. Lucretia leads  
Ilithyia to the triclinium.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA  
Is it true, then? Crixus and  
Spartacus face the Shadow of Death?

LUCRETIA  
(pained)  
They do.

Ilithyia beams in excitement.

ILITHYIA  
The blood will surely flow on the  
day. I long to see it pour from the  
Thracian.

She smiles, blood lust shining in her eyes as she passes  
FRAME, WIPING US TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE/BALCONY - DAY

TIGHT ON SPARTACUS as a wooden practice sword cracks him in  
the face. Blood erupts from his mouth. POP WIDE to reveal

DOCTORE

schooling Spartacus and Crixus with two practice swords.  
Spartacus slams to the ground, stunned by the blow. Crixus  
rushes Doctore. Doctore counters with lightning speed,  
cracking Crixus repeatedly before kicking him to the ground.  
Ashur, watching with a few other men, stifles a laugh.

DOCTORE  
You attack as you would a man.  
Theokoles is beyond flesh. Beyond  
blood and bone. He is the shadow  
that precedes death. Allow it to  
fall upon you alone... and you are  
lost. Rise, and come at me as one!

Spartacus glances at Crixus. Crixus glares, turns away as he  
rises and attacks. ARM UP to find

LUCRETIA AND ILITHYIA

on the balcony watching the display. Ilithyia thirstily  
downs a cup of water, holds it out for Naevia for more.  
Naevia looks to Lucretia, who reluctantly nods the go-ahead.

ILITHYIA  
How Crixus moves... the way his  
muscles catch the sun... Truly the  
Champion of Capua.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lucretia looks down at him battling Doctore, sadness filling her eyes.

LUCRETIA  
None to his equal.

THE TRAINING SQUARE

Doctore whirls and spins, fluidly countering every attack from Spartacus and Crixus. Crixus and Spartacus move to attack simultaneously, but only succeed in getting in each other's way. Crixus snarls.

CRIXUS  
Give way, you stupid fuck!

SPARTACUS  
The advantage was mine!

Doctore uses the distraction to attack, dropping both men to the ground again.

DOCTORE  
You jostle and trip over the other like fools. You face Theokoles in the Primus! Prove yourselves worthy!

Spartacus and Crixus comply, rising to engage Doctore again.

THE BALCONY

Ilithyia takes in the show, her eyes dancing.

ILITHYIA  
I crave a closer look. Can we go down among them?

LUCRETIA  
My husband would frown upon it. The bowels of a ludus are no place for a senator's daughter.

ILITHYIA  
A private viewing then, in the villa? I would pay for it, of course.

Lucretia hesitates, sees opportunity.

LUCRETIA  
A favor among friends.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA

You must let me return it, then.  
I've given thought to your problem,  
and have discovered solution.

LUCRETIA

My problem...?

ILITHYIA

Children.

Lucretia forces a smile.

LUCRETIA

Oh. Of course.

ILITHYIA

I've heard of a woman, a priestess  
of Juno, blessed with certain gifts  
of fertility. Many prominent women  
speak of her. Servillius, Cornelia,  
Laelia --

LUCRETIA

Ovidius' wife?

ILITHYIA

You know her?

LUCRETIA

In passing. She has a young boy.

ILITHYIA

And would have none, if not touched  
by the woman I speak of. Will you  
let me arrange it? As a gift for  
your hospitality?

Lucretia hesitates, nods uncomfortably. Ilithyia squeals,  
kissing her impulsively, innocently.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)

We are friends, aren't we?

LUCRETIA

The very best.

Ilithyia beams, turning back to the square. Lucretia eyes  
her for a moment, not feeling friendly in the least, before  
shifting her gaze to

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE TRAINING SQUARE

Sweat and grime stain Crixus and Spartacus as they battle Doctore. Still unable to work as one, Doctore once again smashes each painfully to the ground. He stares down at them.

DOCTORE

Pathetic.

He turns away in disgust, WIPING US TO --

INT. BATHS - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

The bath is sparsely populated by GLADIATORS. Spartacus and Crixus stand apart as SLAVES scrape the dirt and blood caked to their battered bodies. A beat. Spartacus addresses Crixus without looking at him.

SPARTACUS

How are we to fare against  
Theokoles, when we cannot even best  
Doctore?

CRIXUS

I could have had him a dozen times,  
if you had not gotten underfoot.

SPARTACUS

I take the sands beside you in this  
fight, Crixus.

CRIXUS

Just because you stand near me with  
sword and shield, do not mistake  
yourself a gladiator. You fight to  
leave these walls. I fight to honor  
them.

Grunts of approval from the men.

SPARTACUS

You fight... because you are a  
slave. Like me.

Crixus moves closer, his smile never wavering.

CRIXUS

No. Not like you. I accept my life  
here. I embrace it. But you... you  
still dream of a life beyond the  
arena. Where that wife of yours

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS (cont'd)  
 we've all heard about is yet  
 nestled by your side. And that is  
 all it is, Spartacus. A dream. One  
 day soon you will awaken to the  
 truth. You are never leaving this  
 place. And your woman is either  
 dead, or fucked to madness by a  
 hundred Roman cocks --

WHAM! Spartacus CLOCKS Crixus. Crixus snarls and TACKLES him to the ground, pounding on him. The men erupt in laughter and cheers. Suddenly two GIANT ARMS coil around Crixus' neck, hauling him up. It's Doctore, pulling them apart. The men go quiet. Doctore releases Crixus.

DOCTORE  
 Clean yourselves up. Domina  
 requests your presence. Both of  
 you.

OFF Spartacus, seething as the BACKGROUND shifts,  
 TRANSITIONING US TO --

INT. TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Spartacus and Crixus stand before Ilithyia wearing only the subligaria (loincloth), their hands bound in chains. Lucretia hovers nearby. Naevia, Ilithyia's Body Slaves, and two Guards are in the background. Ilithyia eyes Spartacus, a faint, displeased smile tugging at her lips.

ILITHYIA  
 Do you know who I am, Thracian?

Spartacus ignores her.

LUCRETIA  
 Speak.

A beat. Spartacus shifts his gaze to face her.

SPARTACUS  
 I have seen you. With Legatus  
 Glaber.

ILITHYIA  
 I am his wife. He is regrettably  
 abroad, and will not be able to  
 witness your death against  
 Theokoles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She moves in closer, her hand touching his chest as her lips move to his ear.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)  
But I shall whisper of it to him,  
replaying the moment when we are  
intwined in our bed.

BATIATUS (V.O.)  
Apologies.

Ilithyia turns to see Batiatus has entered.

BATIATUS  
I require the Thracian for a  
moment.

ILITHYIA  
Extend it by a lifetime. I am done  
with him.

Batiatus motions to a Guard, who escorts Spartacus out. Spartacus glances back at Ilithyia, murder flashing in his eyes.

BATIATUS  
(re: Crixus)  
The Champion of Capua! A rare honor  
to receive a private audience.

ILITHYIA  
One I'm most appreciative of.  
Although he does seem overdressed  
for the occasion.

BATIATUS  
(to Crixus)  
Your subligaria. Remove it.

Lucretia hides her displeasure as Crixus complies. Naevia can't help but steal a furtive glance before quickly averting her eyes. Ilithyia, however, has no qualms, staring directly at the blazing sun.

ILITHYIA  
Your champion is bold to his  
purpose.

BATIATUS  
And I to mine, which pulls me  
elsewhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Batiatus bows slightly, exits. Ilithyia circles Crixus. Lust fills her eyes as her fingers trace his skin.

ILITHYIA

His flesh is hard as marble. Would that every man were carved so...

Lucretia doesn't care for her pet to be stroked by another hand.

LUCRETIA

We must not keep him too long. He continues his training at first light.

ILITHYIA

Do you think he will survive, against the Shadow?

Lucretia looks to Crixus, worry seizing her.

LUCRETIA

Only the gods hold the answer.

ILITHYIA

It would be pity to see such a man marred.

Lucretia senses an opportunity, takes it regardless of Batiatus' warning not to broach the subject.

LUCRETIA

There may be a way to avoid such tragedy. A word from your father to the Magistrate, perhaps...

Ilithyia cocks her head, not understanding.

ILITHYIA

To what end?

LUCRETIA

Replacing Crixus in the games.

Crixus tenses, shooting her a surprised look. Ilithyia giggles, considering Crixus.

ILITHYIA

Is that what you want? Do you fear entering the arena with Theokoles?

CRIXUS

No. I long for it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ilithyia beams, intoxicated by Crixus' conviction.

ILITHYIA  
As I long to see it.

OFF Lucretia, knowing her only chance to save Crixus has evaporated...

INT. OFFICE CHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Spartacus stands, still in chains. Batiatus pours wine.

BATIATUS  
You survived being dragged from  
your homeland by Legatus fucking  
Glaber. You survived execution by  
four gladiators in the arena. You  
even survived the horrors of the  
Pits.

He sips the wine, considers Spartacus.

BATIATUS (cont'd)  
Can you survive this?

SPARTACUS  
(a beat)  
The training goes poorly.

BATIATUS  
Through whose fault?

SPARTACUS  
Crixus and I fight at cross  
purposes.

BATIATUS  
Then find a way to unite them. You  
may have saved my life, but yours  
is yet of little worth in the  
arena. But to lose Crixus along  
with you... I fear it would be a  
blow this ludus will not recover  
from.

SPARTACUS  
My concern is only for my wife.

BATIATUS  
And her fate is tied to these  
walls. If they collapse around me,  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (cont'd)  
I will be unable to help her from  
beneath the rubble.

A beat.

SPARTACUS  
I will not die until she is safe.

BATIATUS  
Prove it so. Fight as one with  
Crixus, and best Theokoles. Or all  
is lost.

Ashur appears in the doorway.

ASHUR  
Barca has returned, bearing gifts.

BATIATUS  
(to Guard, re:  
Spartacus)  
Remove him to the barracks.

Batiatus sweeps out with Ashur. OFF Spartacus, considering  
his words...

INT. HOLDING CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Batiatus, dagger on his belt, enters with Ashur. REMUS, the  
slave trader, sits bound to a chair in the center of the  
cell. Unconscious. Blood trickling from a busted lip. Barca  
looms behind him in the shadows.

BATIATUS  
Wake him.

Barca roughly slaps Remus. The man coughs, sputters blood.

BATIATUS (cont'd)  
Two slaves, broken by your hand,  
made attempt on my life. Who  
purchased them?

REMUS  
I know not... what you speak...

BATIATUS  
I speak of being fucked. By the  
gods, by the Magistrate, by that  
cock shit Solonius and his grinning  
schemes! I am of a proud family! A  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (cont'd)  
family of means and history, you  
fucking cunt!

Batiatus loses his shit, repeatedly SMASHES Remus in the face with his ring-encrusted hand as he rants.

BATIATUS (cont'd)  
You sold the men! Common slaves,  
sent to fuck me like a whore! The  
gods tear the world down, but I  
will not be fucked! I! WILL! NOT!  
BE! FUCKED!

Batiatus catches his breath, blood DRIPPING from his rings. Remus' face is a brutal display of raw, bleeding flesh. He spits blood and teeth, finally croaking a name.

REMUS  
(a whisper)  
...Ovidius.

BATIATUS  
What?

REMUS  
Ovidius... Sold... to Ovidius...

BATIATUS  
(a beat)  
Was that so difficult?

Batiatus smiles warmly -- then pulls his dagger and SLITS Remus' throat. As he dies a slow, blood gurgling death...

ASHUR  
(concerned)  
Ovidius is cousin to the  
Magistrate.

BATIATUS  
He could be cousin to Jupiter  
himself, I give no shit. I will  
have satisfaction.

Batiatus sweeps out, WIPING US TO --

INT. MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Crixus strides past in all his glory, glaring at Spartacus as he passes. Varro, finishing his meager morning meal next to Spartacus, frowns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRO

So it goes well, then.

SPARTACUS

The man is no friend to reason.

VARRO

Then find means to acquaint him. I tend to cry when the people close to me pass. It would be an embarrassment for the men to see me weep over your mangled body.

Varro rises with his empty bowl. Ashur hobbles up as he moves off.

ASHUR

A word of advice, Spartacus.

Spartacus frowns, neither trusting nor caring for the man.

SPARTACUS

At what cost?

ASHUR

Freely given. Do not think you can come to terms with Crixus. I trusted him once in the arena. With unfortunate result.

Ashur glances at his crippled leg, the memory of the betrayal fresh. Spartacus glances over to Crixus, where he laughs with Barca.

SPARTACUS

He would turn his sword against his ally?

ASHUR

Even Barca, if he stood between him and glory. The only way to survive against Theokoles is to consider Crixus equal enemy.

Ashur hobbles away. Spartacus shifts his attention to Crixus, his eyes narrowing. OFF Crixus, catching the look and returning it with an unpleasant smile...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - EVENING

The sun hangs low on the horizon. TIGHT ON Spartacus as he hits the ground hard, his face bloodied. POP WIDE to reveal

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Crixus laid out nearby. Doctore stands over them, twin practice swords in hand.

DOCTORE

You dishonor me.

Spartacus and Crixus, exhausted and drenched with sweat, painfully rise to their feet.

CRIXUS

The Thracian impedes my attack.

SPARTACUS

I seek to strengthen it.

CRIXUS

I need no aid.

DOCTORE

No, you need the gods to descend and fight by your side! And even then victory is doubtful.

(frustrated)

Words, falling upon deaf ears.

Doctore throws his swords at his feet, sticking them in the sand.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Attend your eyes, then...

Doctore unlatches his breast plate.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Let them drink deep the pain that awaits you.

He lets the breast plate fall to the ground, revealing the horrible scars he carries from his encounter with Theokoles. Spartacus and Crixus take them in with shock.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

My failure. Your lesson.

Doctore indicates a mottled SCAR that snakes from his chest down to his abdomen.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

His first cut...

EXT. ARENA - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A SWORD slices across Doctore's stomach and chest. He stiffens in agony, FRAME FREEZING as the blood continues to splatter. (NOTE: In all the FLASHBACKS, we will never see Theokoles, only the giant's blade. He will not be revealed until he enters the arena against Spartacus and Crixus.)

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - EVENING

Doctore stalks around Spartacus and Crixus.

DOCTORE  
Dealt when I thought him  
vulnerable, and pressed my attack  
unwisely.

Doctore shoots Crixus a withering look.

DOCTORE (cont'd)  
His next assault came when I fell  
back to regain position....

EXT. ARENA - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Theokoles' sword tears open Doctore's back. He screams, the FRAME FREEZING as the blood continues to splatter.

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - EVENING

Spartacus eyes the ugly SCAR creasing Doctore's back as he continues circling.

DOCTORE  
Yet these wounds are nothing. A  
game of blood, to amuse the crowd.  
And when he tires of playing, he  
will move to part head from your  
neck...

EXT. ARENA - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Doctore bends out of the way as a SWORD almost decapitates him. The blade catches Doctore across the face, ripping open his flesh in a gush of blood. FREEZE FRAME on Doctore as the blood splatters, WIPING US TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - EVENING

Doctore glares at Spartacus and Crixus, the SCAR marring his face a harbinger of what awaits them.

DOCTORE

I live only because I survived longer than any man who ever stood against him. Some herald that as a victory in itself.

(a beat)

I am not among them.

SPARTACUS

You tell us the Shadow wounds both when he is pressed and when he is given ground.

CRIXUS

How is he to be defeated?

DOCTORE

By accomplishing both at once.

(to Crixus)

Press...

(to Spartacus)

and defend.

(to Crixus)

Distract...

(to Spartacus)

and strike. Fight as one. Or die as two.

Doctore retrieves his swords.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Show me the way to honor.

Spartacus glances at Crixus, steeling himself. Crixus grits his teeth and attacks. As Spartacus follows to engage Doctore, we MOVE OFF of the action to --

EXT. BALCONY - BATIATUS' VILLA - DUSK

Batiatus, Lucretia and Naevia watch from above.

LUCRETIA

The games tomorrow, and yet Doctore presses them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

To their benefit. I have business  
in town. It will take me late into  
the night.

She doesn't respond, her eyes fixed on Crixus.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Lucretia.

LUCRETIA

Yes, business.

BATIATUS

(hesitating)

If you would prefer I delay it --

LUCRETIA

No, I have diversion. Ilithyia  
comes with her Priestess.

Batiatus puts a hand to Lucretia's stomach.

BATIATUS

May the gods bless us with miracle.

He gently kisses her.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

They fucking owe us something.

He exits into the villa. OFF Lucretia, her eyes falling on  
Crixus as she prays for a different miracle...

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

CLOSE ON an ornate FERTILITY CANDLE being lit.

PRIESTESS (O.C.)

How often do you engage in  
intercourse?

PULL BACK to reveal THE PRIESTESS, a sensual woman draped in  
a shimmering, gauzy gown. She glances over to Lucretia.  
Ilithyia is in the background, lounging with a cup of wine.

LUCRETIA

Several times a week. Sometimes  
more.

The Priestess prepares a chalice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIESTESS  
Has seed ever taken hold?

LUCRETIA  
Never.

The Priestess nods, choosing an herb from a wide assortment to add to the chalice.

PRIESTESS  
Have there been other men, besides  
your husband?

LUCRETIA  
What bearing does that have?

Lucretia shoots an uncomfortable glance towards Ilithyia.

PRIESTESS  
It will inform the correct  
combination of elements.  
(re: Ilithyia)  
The ritual is usually a private  
matter. Perhaps --

ILITHYIA  
(to Lucretia)  
Oh please, can I stay? I've never  
seen one of these. It's so  
intriguing.

Lucretia musters a smile, nods.

PRIESTESS  
Other men? Have there been any?

LUCRETIA  
(reluctantly)  
Yes.

Ilithyia stifles a shocked giggle. The Priestess pours goat's milk into the chalice.

PRIESTESS  
How many?

LUCRETIA  
One. Frequently.

Ilithyia chews her lower lip, eyes dancing at the salaciousness of the revelation. The Priestess chooses a Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis Pyramidalis*), about twelve inches long, its bulbs exposed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRIESTESS

Then the difficulty resides not in  
the seed, but within the vessel.

ILITHYIA

You mean there's something wrong  
with her?

The question is innocent, but Lucretia still feels the sting  
of it.

PRIESTESS

The gods have decided to withhold  
the joy of children. We will  
entreat them to reconsider...

The Priestess culls a bulb from the orchid, kisses it, dips  
it into the goat's milk.

PRIESTESS (cont'd)

Drink.

Lucretia reluctantly takes the concoction. The Priestess  
mutters a silent prayer as Lucretia drains the chalice.

PRIESTESS (cont'd)

Juno has blessed you. You must  
copulate within the hour.

LUCRETIA

So soon?

PRIESTESS

Before the flame of life expires.  
(bowing slightly)  
Good fortune to you.

Naevia escorts the Priestess out. Ilithyia rises.

ILITHYIA

Only an hour? You think she would  
tell you that before she started,  
considering her price.

LUCRETIA

Gratitude for arranging this.

ILITHYIA

Unnecessary words from a friend.  
And I being yours, I'll leave you  
to complete the ritual. Although  
tales of this other man will be

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA (cont'd)  
 most expected when time is not at  
 issue...

She kisses Lucretia and exits with a giggle. Lucretia's eyes drop to the fertility candle. PUSH IN on its flame as it DISSOLVES into a TORCH, TRANSITIONING US TO --

INT. BATHS - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

A TORCH illuminates the oily walls of the bath. PULL BACK to reveal Crixus once again scraping the dirt and blood off his flesh. Spartacus sits engaged in the same. They scrape in silence. A long beat passes, then:

SPARTACUS  
 You were right.

Crixus glances over.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)  
 I do not honor these walls.

CRIXUS  
 A fact well known.

SPARTACUS  
 Has it always been so for you? When you were first brought here, against your will? Your life traded for a few coins?

CRIXUS  
 More than a few.

SPARTACUS  
 Is that your worth, then?

A beat.

CRIXUS  
 Have you not wondered why the great Theokoles would grace us with his presence?

SPARTACUS  
 The promise of wealth.

CRIXUS  
 He has earned a thousand fortunes. No, he comes not for the coin, but for the glory of facing the  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS (cont'd)  
 Champion of Capua. The undefeated  
 Gaul.

SPARTACUS  
 Glory.

CRIXUS  
 There is no greater thing, than to  
 stand victorious in the arena.

SPARTACUS  
 Is there nothing more for you,  
 then? No purpose beyond blood? No  
 dream beyond the cheers of the  
 crowd? Is there nothing else you  
 fight for?

Crixus ponders the weight of Spartacus' words. A Guard enters, interrupting the moment.

GUARD  
 (to Crixus)  
 You are summoned.

Crixus rises, following the Guard. OFF Spartacus watching him go, knowing he's failed to reach him...

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Lucretia stands waiting in a gorgeous see-through gown, her body silhouetted by the flame of the fertility candle. Naevia appears, escorting Crixus. She lingers outside the bedroom as he enters, Spartacus' words still lingering.

LUCRETIA  
 Step into the light. Let me gaze  
 upon the Champion of Capua.

Crixus complies. Lucretia drinks him in.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)  
 You are truly a wonder.

CRIXUS  
 As are you, Domina.

She glances at the fertility candle, already half burned.

LUCRETIA  
 We do not have much time. Come. I  
 would see it well used.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Crixus goes to her. She kisses him hungrily, her hand feeling the electric sting of his body as it moves down his chiseled chest. It dips out of frame to grip his manhood and -- she pauses, breaking the kiss in confusion.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)  
Do I not stir you to passion?

CRIXUS  
Yes, Domina.

LUCRETIA  
Your cock would disagree.

CRIXUS  
Apologies, Domina. I am...  
distracted. With thoughts of  
tomorrow.

She whispers in his ear.

LUCRETIA  
I would have you in the moment,  
deep inside me.

Her lips kiss his neck, her tongue plying his skin with sensual enticement. Naevia watches from the shadows for a moment, then averts her eyes as a flood of conflicting emotions wash over her.

CRIXUS  
(soft)  
I have never faced an opponent like  
Theokoles...

LUCRETIA  
He has never faced a man like  
you...

Her hand starts to head back down out of frame. Crixus gently takes it, stopping her.

CRIXUS  
Domina. I would beg favor. Love  
drains a man before battle...

She pauses, looking deep into his eyes -- and seeing something there she has never witnessed: doubt. Tears well in Lucretia's eyes.

LUCRETIA  
I would see you strong. We will  
hold the pleasure of a single  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA (cont'd)  
 night, and pray to the gods for  
 many yet more to come.

She gently kisses him. It's a gesture not of passion, but of love and longing.

CRIXUS  
 (soft)  
 Domina.

He exits, Naevia joining, falling in step to see him out. Lucretia watches Crixus go, the tears finally cresting her cheeks as her hand absently moves to her stomach. Her empty womb. She blows out the fertility candle, PLUNGING US INTO DARKNESS.

INT. OVIDIUS' VILLA - NIGHT

OVIDIUS, the grain merchant who hired the assassins to kill Batiatus (in Episode 104), returns to a dark and quiet home.

OVIDIUS  
 Why are the fucking torches not  
 lit?

No answer.

OVIDIUS (cont'd)  
 Laelia...?

Ovidius enters the triclinium and freezes. His wife LAELIA and several SLAVES lay dead in pools of blood on the floor.

BATIATUS

sits half in the shadows, his hand tenderly resting on Ovidius' terrified eight-year-old SON's shoulder.

BATIATUS  
 I owe you a debt, good Ovidius. And  
 have come to repay.

Ovidius looks to his petrified Son.

OVIDIUS  
 Please. The boy is unstained.

BATIATUS  
 No son is ever unstained by his  
 father's deeds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OVIDIUS  
They were not my own.

BATIATUS  
Two slaves, hired from the cunt  
Remus to take my life. You deny  
giving coin to the cause?

OVIDIUS  
I hired the men, yes. But to  
another's purpose.

Batiatus considers that, turning it in his mind.

BATIATUS  
Who?

Ovidius hesitates.

BATIATUS (cont'd)  
Speak the name, and I swear to the  
gods I will not kill you.

Ovidius glances at his son, swallows hard.

OVIDIUS  
Solonius.

Batiatus' eyes narrow in cold fury.

OVIDIUS (cont'd)  
He paid the balance of your debt to  
me threefold. In exchange for  
arranging your death.

Batiatus stands with a warm smile.

BATIATUS  
Gratitude for your honesty,  
Ovidius.

Ovidius laughs in nervous relief.

OVIDIUS  
You're not going to kill me, then?

BATIATUS  
No.  
(a beat)  
My slave is going to kill you.

Barca emerges from behind Ovidius, still cloaked in shadow.  
All that is visible are the whites of his eyes and his

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

smile. SLOW PUSH IN ON Ovidius' terrified Son as we hear SCREAMS and the BREAKING OF BONES OFF SCREEN. Finally, Ovidius' blood soaked body falls to the ground.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

(to Barca)

Burn this fucking place to the ground. But first... attend to the child.

Batiatus exits. Barca turns to the child. Killing him is clearly something he does not want to do. OFF Ovidius' Son as Barca steps towards him, WIPING US TO --

INT. STORAGE AREA/MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Naevia escorts Crixus down the stairs leading to the storage area adjacent to the mess hall. As they reach the landing, she pauses, breaking the silence with a whisper.

NAEVIA

You're going to die tomorrow.  
Aren't you?

Crixus sees the fear in her eyes. And something else.

CRIXUS

Only the gods divine the future.

NAEVIA

Why didn't you let Ilithyia help you? She could have spoken to her father --

CRIXUS

To what end? Disgrace?

NAEVIA

Honor and glory. That's all you care about, isn't it?

CRIXUS

No. Not all.

He gently touches her cheek. Her heart seizes in her chest.

NAEVIA

Still the fool.

CRIXUS

Still.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He leans down and softly kisses her. Tears stain her cheeks as she returns it. Passion rises, born of the desperate moment. He pulls her into the shadows, his hand moving up her thigh, lifting her dress. Naevia stops him.

NAEVIA

You said love drains a man.

CRIXUS

Or it can fill him with hope, in the proper arms...

He kisses her again. She takes his hand and moves it back to her thigh. He lifts her dress. She gasps as he slips inside her. MOVE OFF of them to find a GUARD passing on the other side of the gate, unaware of their presence as he WIPES US TO --

INT. BARRACKS - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus sits awake in the barracks, Sura's binding considered between his fingers.

VARRO

The odds do not favor you.

Spartacus glances over to find Varro still not yet asleep.

SPARTACUS

They seldom do.

VARRO

I've heard Barca has laid a large amount of coin on you. Well, more towards Crixus, but still...

SPARTACUS

And you?

VARRO

If I had the means, I would wager all with Barca. You're too fucking stubborn to die.

Spartacus can't help but chuckle at that.

SPARTACUS

And yet every man has his end.

VARRO

I pray to the gods you have not yet reached yours.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

If they do not answer, I would ask  
a thing of you.

Varro's eyes shift to Sura's binding.

VARRO

Your wife?

Spartacus nods, emotion blocking further words.

VARRO (cont'd)

I will do everything I can to find  
her. Now sleep. Tomorrow you face a  
legend. And may yet become one  
yourself.

Varro closes his eyes. PUSH IN on Spartacus as he brings the binding close to his lips, lost in thought, sleep denied him... PRE-LAP: The ROAR of the CROWD and the CLASH OF SWORDS rises to a deafening pitch...

EXT. ARENA - SUNSET

WHAM! TIGHT ON A GLADIATOR with blood spewing from his mangled face shield as he hits the ground, twitches, lies forever still. POP WIDE to reveal his opponent (Hoplomachus) raise his gory spear in victory. The CROWD roars.

THE PULVINUS

Naevia and other SLAVES attend with water and wine, fanning the PATRICIANS crowding the Pulvinus. Batiatus and Lucretia sit with Ilithyia. Solonius and several DIGNITARIES converse further down. The Magistrate's wife DOMITIA occupies the center with her excited 14-year-old son NUMERIUS. The Magistrate's seat is currently empty.

NUMERIUS

Did you see?! Septimus the victor,  
as I said! Valarius always drops  
his shield when he attacks, a  
disadvantage against the spear.

BATIATUS

The boy has a keen eye.

DOMITIA

Towards gladiators, yes. His  
studies are another matter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Numerius scowls. Down in the arena, the dead Gladiator is dragged from the sand by the LIBITINARII.

A PAINTED FIGURE OF CERES,

the Goddess of Harvest and Renewal, is carried in and paraded around to the CHEERS of the sweat-soaked crowd.

ILITHYIA

Finally, the Primus. Another moment and my tongue would turn to dust.

Lucretia motions to Naevia to bring Ilithyia water.

LUCRETIA

Water.

NAEVIA

Apologies, Domina. We have used our last.

SOLONIUS

Please. Share a bit of mine.

Solonius waves one of his Slaves over to fill her cup. Batiatus forces a smile.

BATIATUS

You are too kind, good Solonius.

SOLONIUS

You'd do the same, if you were able. No matter. Soon Theokoles will honor the gods with blood, and they in turn will bless us with endless rain.

Magistrate Calavius enters, obviously upset as he takes his seat.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

I pray for the truth in it. The drought is driving the city mad! Unfortunate word has reached us that our dearest cousin Ovidius was murdered in his home.

Everyone is shocked. Solonius stiffens.

SOLONIUS

Ovidius?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA

No. I spoke of his wife not a night ago.

LUCRETIA

What of their child? He was so young.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Their villa was burned, only a few bodies yet recovered. I fear the boy among the ruins.

BATIATUS

A tragedy. One can not but wonder what would prompt such an act.

Batiatus shoots Solonius a look. Solonius isn't sure what to make of it, shifts uncomfortably.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Let us turn our minds to hopes of rain, to cool the fevered brow of our city.

He steps forward to address the crowd, who ROAR their approval.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS (cont'd)

Citizens of Capua! Brothers of Rome!

INT. CHUTES - ARENA - SUNSET

The Magistrate's VOICE echoes in the background.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS (O.S.)

In the name of my forefathers, I, Titus Calavius, bestow unto you, the final event! In the tradition of gladiatorial combat, a spectacle of blood and death, a sacrifice to Ceres, the great goddess of renewal! May she wet our lands with her lips and shower us with an ocean of rain!

Spartacus tightens Sura's binding around his wrist. Crixus stands ready, muscles coiled like steel. Doctore looks out through the gate across the arena, remembering that day years ago when he was set against the Shadow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

The hour of my glory is long past.  
(to Spartacus and  
Crixus)

Yours stands before you. Bring  
peace to old wounds. And kill that  
fucking son of a whore.

Doctore moves away from the gate. Crixus and Spartacus step forward. A beat.

CRIXUS

Your woman. She's the reason you  
refuse to die?

SPARTACUS

She is.

Crixus looks out across the arena, his eyes finding Naevia in the pulvinus. A beat before he responds to Spartacus, not looking at the man.

CRIXUS

Perhaps there is something beyond  
glory after all.

Spartacus glances at Crixus in surprise. Has common ground just been found? TRUMPETS sound. Crixus pulls on his polished helmet. Spartacus follows suit. The gate grinds open. Spartacus and Crixus are handed their swords and shields.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS (O.S.)

From the house of Quintus Lentulus  
Batiatus...

EXT. ARENA - SUNSET

Spartacus trots out into the arena.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Behold, Spartacus! Thraex!

A smattering of CHEERS but mostly boos. His humiliating defeat against Crixus has not been forgotten.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS (O.S.)

Joined in battle today by the  
Undeclared Gaul! The Champion of  
Capua! Behold, Crixus! Murmillo!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Crixus trots out to the ROAR of the masses. He raises his arms, shouting his usual call to glory:

CRIXUS  
Capua! Shall we begin?!

The mob goes WILD. Crixus takes his place, nods to Spartacus. Spartacus returns it.

PULIVINUS

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS  
Together they stand against a man  
that has never fallen! A beast  
that has never been tamed! A  
legend that has never been  
tarnished! By the grace of Marcus  
Decius Solonius! Behold,  
Theokoles! The Shadow of Death!

The crowd ROARS... then SILENCES, excited and terrified as another gate GRINDS OPEN.

THEOKOLES, THE SHADOW OF DEATH,

enters the arena, the sky darkening with CLOUDS as he steps onto the sand. He stands nearly seven feet tall.

His exposed flesh crisscrossed with the scars of a thousand battles. He brandishes a THICK SWORD in each hand. No helmet. No shield. His invincible body his only armor.

SPARTACUS AND CRIXUS

trade a look. Ho-ly fuck me. A long, silent beat, finally broken by Theokoles roaring to the crowd. The CROWD erupts in thunderous cheers.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS (cont'd)  
Begin!

Crixus surges forward, taking the lead. Spartacus fans out to the side, backing him up. Crixus attacks, his sword singing through the air, helmet gleaming in the sun. THEOKOLES COUNTERS,

but when Crixus moves back Spartacus surges forward to take up the attack. They continue ebbing and flowing, like Doctore instructed. The crowd GASPS as their swords find their mark, opening up fresh wounds across the giant's mangled flesh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE PULVINUS

is electric with excitement and surprise.

NUMERIUS

They draw blood!

Lucretia's eyes fill with sudden hope. As do Naevia's, unnoticed behind her.

THE ARENA

Spartacus and Crixus circle Theokoles, moving without hesitation or fear. Blood splatters as they land more blows.

THE CHUTES

Doctore stands at the gate, jaw tense, eyes blazing at the display. Varro, Barca, and a handful of other men from the ludus crowd behind him, cheering. All except Ashur, who hangs back, concern creasing his face.

CRIXUS

lands a glancing blow, narrowly avoids Theokoles' sword as it whistles past his helmet.

SPARTACUS

rushes in, distracting Theokoles as Crixus redoubles his assault. Swords clash. Blood spews in glorious slow motion as they continue to hack away at the giant. Spartacus lands a devastating blow. The crowd GASPS as

THEOKOLES STUMBLES

back in pain. Crixus lands a second, equally devastating blow. Theokoles momentarily lowers his guard, stunned. Spartacus and Crixus both surge forward, simultaneously slicing Theokoles across the chest.

THEOKOLES FALLS BACK,

crashing to the sand. BLOOD splashes up into the air. The giant doesn't move. A beat of stunned silence -- broken by the deafening ROAR of the crowd.

THE PULVINUS

Everyone leaps to their feet. Tears well in Lucretia's eyes. Naevia beams in relief. Batiatus cheers. Solonius looks stricken.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

Yes! YES!

THE CHUTES

The men go insane. PUSH IN ON Doctore, his eyes wide in disbelief.

THE ARENA

Crixus whips off his helmet. Spartacus follows suit. They share a grin. Crixus throws his arms up in victory. The crowd ROARS. Crixus motions for Spartacus to do the same. He laughs, reluctantly complies. The crowd ROARS -- then suddenly falls silent.

THEOKOLES STIRS

behind Spartacus and Crixus. LIGHTNING FLASHES as he rises, bloodied and wounded but far from dead.

THE PULVINUS

Batiatus' joy crumbles. Lucretia stiffens in concern, as does Naevia behind her.

ILITHYIA

(stunned)

He yet lives!

Solonius smiles, assured in the outcome as he looks back to --

THE ARENA

Theokoles laughs, his voice a deep and terrible thing. He looks out across the arena, ROARS to the crowd.

THEOKOLES

Capua! Shall I begin?!

The crowd goes INSANE.

THE CHUTES

Doctore's eyes drain of hope. Dread seizes Varro's heart. Ashur allows himself a grin in the background.

THE ARENA

Theokoles grins as he trots towards Spartacus and Crixus. Spartacus shares a concerned look with Crixus. Perhaps the legends are true. The Shadow can truly not be killed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THEOKOLES

slams into them, swords contrailing through the air. Spartacus and Crixus engage the giant, once again working as one, ebbing and flowing in their attack. Theokoles is driven back -- then suddenly counters, driving the two men back, giving them no time to regroup.

SPARTACUS AND CRIXUS

struggle under the assault, their carefully orchestrated attacks shattering into chaos.

CRIXUS

(to Spartacus)

Move out of the way, you fucking --

WHAM! Theokoles slams Spartacus into Crixus, sending both men crashing to the ground in a tangled heap. Theokoles laughs, grandstanding for the crowd. Crixus hisses at Spartacus.

CRIXUS (cont'd)

Give ground, or I'll kill you myself!

Crixus rises. Spartacus follows, eyes deepening with worry. Whatever common ground they may have shared is quickly slipping away.

CRIXUS

rushes Theokoles. Theokoles whirls to met him. Swords flash, Theokoles' blade finding its mark and SLICING open Crixus' arm. BLOOD flies as he staggers back in shock. The crowd ROARS.

THE PULVINUS

Lucretia sucks air. Batiatus sinks into despair, his ruin at hand. Solonius gloats.

THE ARENA

Spartacus rushes in to distract Theokoles from the wounded Crixus. They trade thunderous blows. Theokoles whirls, slamming his sword into Spartacus' shield with such force the smaller man is sent flying, landing hard some distance away. He spits blood, dazed and nearly unconscious from the blow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THEOKOLES

turns his attention back to Crixus as the Gaul rushes him, mad with rage. Lightning fast blows are exchanged. Crixus sees advantage and RAMS HIS SWORD through the side of Theokoles' gut. The crowd gasps. A frozen moment -- broken by Theokoles snarling and HEADBUTTING Crixus.

CRIXUS STUMBLES BACK,

blood spurting from his nose as he loses his grip on his sword. Theokoles drops one of his own and with a grunt PULLS THE SWORD FROM HIS SIDE and attacks Crixus with it. Crixus tries to deflect with his shield, but

THEOKOLES SLICES CRIXUS OPEN

from stomach to chest, sending blood spraying. Crixus loses his shield as he's spun around from the blow. Theokoles SLICES CRIXUS ACROSS THE BACK, sending more blood spewing. Crixus staggers, falls to his knees. The roar of the crowd fades as he looks up to

THE PULVINUS

where Lucretia stands stricken. But it's Naevia's face he seeks. He finds it, slick with tears. The deafening ROAR of the crowd surges back up.

THE ARENA

Theokoles moves in behind Crixus. He raises his sword to decapitate him and --

SPARTACUS

THEOKOLES!

Theokoles turns. Spartacus has risen, bloodied but determined. Spartacus snarls and charges. Theokoles grins, kicking Crixus to the ground before whirling to meet Spartacus.

TIME SLOWS AND ACCELERATES

as the two warriors trade bone-shattering blows. Theokoles swings his sword. Spartacus bends out of the way, narrowly avoiding decapitation. He counters, slamming his shield into Theokoles' wounded side. The giant howls, SMASHING THE SHIELD from Spartacus' grasp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

crashes across the sand, landing near Theokoles' sword, abandoned when he pulled Crixus' sword from his side. Spartacus snatches it up and reengages the giant with TWO SWORDS as he attacks. Steel flashes.

CRIXUS

sputters blood, spots his helmet glinting in the sun close by. He struggles to reach it. Spartacus is smashed back. Just as Theokoles raises his sword for the death blow, Crixus latches onto the gleaming helmet, REFLECTING A RAY OF SUNLIGHT into the giant's eyes.

THEOKOLES GRUNTS,

momentarily blinded. Spartacus seizes the distraction and attacks, slicing into Theokoles. BLOOD SPLATTERS. The giant raises his sword to counter but SPARTACUS SWINGS UP, HACKING OFF THE FRONT OF THEOKOLES' FACE.

THE CROWD GASPS

as Theokoles staggers. He works the half of his jaw that remains as he collapses to his knees, blood pouring from his ruined face. Spartacus swings again, DECAPITATING THEOKOLES in a GEYSER OF BLOOD.

THE CHUTES

A bit of the giant's blood SPLATTERS across Doctore's face...and for the first time, we see the formidable man smile. Varro and the men go INSANE behind him. Ashur glances at the celebrating Barca, realizing he just lost a fortune to him on the wager. He is now beyond fucked.

THE ARENA

The giant's body slumps to the sand. LIGHTNING FLASHES. THUNDER BOOMS. The heavens split open as it begins to RAIN. The crowd ROARS.

THE PULVINUS

Batiatus throws his arms up in celebration, gloating over Solonius as the Magistrate bolts to his feet. Ilithyia is post-orgasmic, the sight of gore exploding inside her. Lucretia stands numb. Her eyes, as well as Naevia's, fall on

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS,

the rain mixing with the blood caked on his face as he slips into unconsciousness. Spartacus glances at him with concern as the Medicus rushes to aid the fallen Gaul. The crowd ROARS Spartacus' name, drawing his attention to the stands.

THE CROWD

Spar-ta-cus!! Spar-ta-cus!!

Spartacus holds his blood-drenched arms up in victory. The crowd roars. The drought is ended. But the legend of Spartacus has just begun...

BLACKOUT.

END OF EPISODE

