

Delicate Things

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FADE IN:

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

THUNDER BOOMS. RAIN pours from a swirl of DARK CLOUDS. [The rain will be ever present throughout the episode unless otherwise noted.]

BATIATUS (O.S.)

We have seen misfortune. We have
felt the sting of defeat. The
humility of vacant purse and empty
stomach.

Follow the rain down to THE BALCONY, where BATIATUS stands proudly besides SPARTACUS, along with LUCRETIA and NAEVIA. DOCTORE and the GLADIATORS are gathered below in the square, including VARRO, BARCA, GNAEUS, HAMILCAR, RHASKOS, and ASHUR.

BATIATUS

Some believed the House of Batiatus
would never reclaim its former
glory. That we would fade from
memory, forsaken by history. But we
have proved them wrong. We have
proved that the name Batiatus will
live long after we have gone to
dust and bone. Stand proud before
the Bringer of Rain! The Slayer of
the Shadow of Death! The new
Champion of Capua! Spartacus!

Batiatus throws Spartacus' hand up in victory. Varro and the Gladiators go nuts, chanting his name. Ashur doesn't join in, the bet he lost to Barca weighing heavy on him.

GLADIATORS

Spartacus! Spartacus! Spartacus...

Doctore beams, as does Batiatus. Lucretia musters a weak smile, not liking Spartacus being anointed with Crixus' title of Champion of Capua.

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - CONTINUOUS

The chant of "Spartacus" wafts through the infirmary. CRIXUS lies on a slab, bloody and barely conscious from the pain of his wounds received at the monstrous hands of Theokoles. The MEDICUS nods to two GUARDS. They pin Crixus down to the slab as the Medicus pulls

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CONTINUED:

A HOT IRON

from the fire. The Medicus brings it to bear on the gory wound snaking across Crixus' stomach. The flesh SIZZLES on contact. Crixus SCREAMS, his agony lost in the cacophony of celebration.

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

GLADIATORS

Spartacus! Spartacus!

BATIATUS

Spartacus! A titan, his victory eclipsing all others! Quenching our thirst! Fulfilling our hopes and dreams! Behold the man, as he becomes legend!

The men ROAR. OFF Spartacus, not sure what to make of his new-found fame...

INT. BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Batiatus moves through the villa with Spartacus. Lucretia is close at hand.

BATIATUS

This is only the beginning! I will build an empire of blood and glory upon your name!

LUCRETIA

He did not stand against Theokoles alone.

BATIATUS

Crixus is not forgotten. He will always have position, if he recovers.

That last part hits Lucretia hard.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Yet Spartacus is the name on the crowd's tongue. And I would see it spoken with ever increasing amazement.

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CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

I defeated a man who could not be defeated. What more can they expect of me?

BATIATUS

Everything! Their appetite is a great beast. It must be constantly fed with new delights.

(an idea)

We'll start by changing your fighting style. Two swords, as Theokoles fought with. We'll see the crowd's pleasure double with their hero now twice as deadly! And ceremonial armor, worthy of a legend! Men will be made to feel smaller by it! Women will moisten at the very sight.

Batiatus catches the uncomfortable look on Spartacus' face.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Ah, but I forget.

(to Lucretia)

He has no hard purpose for just any wet thigh, does he?

LUCRETIA

His purpose and what he does with it is not my concern.

BATIATUS

Fortunate then the gods feel otherwise. They shower him with more than rain and accolades...

Batiatus produces a message scroll from his robes.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

They bless him with news to lift heart higher than the clouds.

Spartacus stiffens with impossible hope.

SPARTACUS

Sura...?

BATIATUS

Found! The dark corners of Syria no match for the bright torch of my discovery!

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CONTINUED:

Lucretia darkens, not caring for the news.

SPARTACUS

Where is she? Is she well? When can I --

BATIATUS

Peace! All is revealed when a mouth closes!

(a grin)

The Syrian Glaber spoke of sold her to a merchant, the sea his mistress. He has recently docked upon the shores of Neapolis.

Spartacus is overwhelmed with surprise and relief.

SPARTACUS

On Roman soil?

BATIATUS

Your wife among his slaves. Two days ride from where you stand, barring incident.

SPARTACUS

When do we leave?

LUCRETIA

Is it wise to allow such a thing?

Batiatus waves that away.

BATIATUS

My man already spurs his horse.
(to Spartacus)
Rest at ease. She moves ever closer to you as we speak.

Spartacus' eyes fill with tears of joy.

SPARTACUS

You are an honorable man. And will forever bear my gratitude.

BATIATUS

As you bear mine. You have elevated the House of Batiatus. Reuniting you with your wife is but the first of many rewards.

Batiatus motions for two Guards to return Spartacus to the ludus. Spartacus bows, barely able to contain his joy.

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CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

Dominus.

They lead him off. Lucretia glowers.

LUCRETIA

Secrets upon secrets.

BATIATUS

The news of her discovery only just reached me.

LUCRETIA

(hushed)

And what of good Ovidius and his family? Why did you keep your plans towards slaughtering them from me? All to clear a few debts.

BATIATUS

It had nothing to do with debt, except one of blood. His was the hand behind attempt on my life in the Pits.

LUCRETIA

Ovidius?

BATIATUS

Moved to purpose by Solonius. I keep from you not out of secrecy, but out of love. I would not have you stained by such things.

He takes her hands.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

We are the toast of the fucking city. Let us take pause and enjoy it.

OFF Batiatus' beaming grin...

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

THE DOOR of a private cell just off the training square (reserved for top gladiators) opens. Doctore shows Spartacus in.

SPARTACUS

Mine alone? Not to be shared?

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CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

Yours alone. Your achievement in earning it profound.

SPARTACUS

Made possible by your instruction.

DOCTORE

My actions only set you to the task. In depriving Theokoles of his life, you brought end to a battle left unfinished by my sword. An end to my shame.

Doctore holds out his hand. Spartacus grips it (forearm to forearm).

SPARTACUS

I live to see my wife again, because of you. A debt not soon forgotten.

DOCTORE

There is no balance between us. Only the promise of future glory.

Spartacus nods, taking in the room.

SPARTACUS

Are candles permitted? Sura was always fond of them.

DOCTORE

You misunderstand. This cell is for you alone. Wives are not permitted to live among us.

Spartacus doesn't like the sound of that.

SPARTACUS

Then where will she stay?

DOCTORE

In the villa. Kept well and safe in return for good service to the Domina.

SPARTACUS

(realizing)
As a slave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

As are we all. But you rise quickly, unlike any other I have witnessed. Continue your ascent, and one day you will gain freedom. For both of you.

Doctore exits. OFF Spartacus, darkening at the thought of Sura forced to continue life as a common slave...

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Ashur, wet from the rain, limps past Gladiators laughing and joking in the corridors. The mood is light and joyful, which only serves to deepen Ashur's frown.

BARCA

Ashur.

Ashur shifts into a forced smile as he turns to find Barca.

ASHUR

Barca! I was this very moment coming to have words.

BARCA

Keep them. I would have coin instead.

ASHUR

It is no small marvel, the fall of Theokoles. Your wager in favor of the unexpected outcome, the size of the odds -- Not a simple matter, to cover a win of such margin.

Barca moves in, looming over Ashur with the promise of violence.

BARCA

I give no shit to margins. Beg, steal, or kill to cover what is owed. Or you will have two worthless legs. And nothing in between to prop yourself up.

Barca reaches down out of frame and gives a squeeze. Ashur grunts in pain as the giant moves off with a laugh. OFF Ashur, burning with hatred...

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

MOVE ACROSS wooden cages filled with BIRDS. Find PIETROS feeding one. Barca enters.

BARCA
I've had exchange with the cripple.

PIETROS
He pays what is owed?

BARCA
Soon the coin will be in hand.
Enough to buy our freedom.

PIETROS
Freedom. The word is foreign to the
tongue.

BARCA
It will learn to savor the taste.

He takes Pietros in his arms and kisses him.

PIETROS
What of the birds?

BARCA
They will fly this place as we do.

Pietros breaks into a grin.

PIETROS
I will see what clothes we have
washed and ready.

He begins gathering stray garments strewn about the cell.

PIETROS (cont'd)
Which direction shall we journey?
How far will we travel?

BARCA
As far as desire wills our feet.

Pietros pauses, his eyes falling on a smear of BLOOD across one of Barca's tunics.

PIETROS
(soft)
This tunic. It was the one you
wore last night when you left.
When good Ovidius was murdered.

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CONTINUED:

Barca frowns. Not something he wishes revisited.

BARCA

There was nothing good about him.

PIETROS

It was you that killed him? All his slaves? His family...

BARCA

My hands did what they were commanded.

PIETROS

The young boy. Ovidius' son. Did they take his life too?

Barca hesitates.

BARCA

Such were my orders. But you know of my affection for delicate things. The boy was spared, and set to wander far from the deed. By the time he is discovered, we will be free.

PIETROS

And your hands?

BARCA

Clean forever more. And yours to command...

He gently touches Pietros' hand. Pietros embraces him, filled with relief and love. ADJUST to find ASHUR lurking in the shadows of the corridor outside the cell. He's overheard the entire conversation. OFF the moment...

INT. BATH - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Lucretia soaks in a full bath. Naevia and another SLAVE GIRL is in with her, gently stroking her skin with cloth (no soap). Batiatus strips to join her.

BATIATUS

Spartacus' victory has ignited the imagination of the city! Orders for my men flood the House of Batiatus from every family with half a name and a little coin!

(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (cont'd)
Prosperity beyond measure is within
our reach!

As Batiatus slides into the bath, Lucretia spots his WOUND from the failed assassination in 104, still red and angry.

LUCRETIA
As are those that would have you
dead.

Slave Girl moves to Batiatus, stroking his skin with her cloth.

BATIATUS
(favoring his wound)
I will see Solonius pay for the
grievance. But such things are not
be hurried. I wish to savor every
drop of sweat spilled from his brow
as my noose tightens upon his neck.

LUCRETIA
I would prefer it tighten quickly.

BATIATUS
Everything to its season.

Batiatus takes the Slave Girl's hand and moves it down OUT OF FRAME. She continues "stroking". Batiatus smiles at Lucretia.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
Let us turn towards more pressing
matters.

LUCRETIA
Reuniting the Thracian with his
wife?

BATIATUS
Not the matter I was referring to.

LUCRETIA
You stand ready?

BATIATUS
Bold to my purpose.

LUCRETIA
Have the girl's ass for a bit. I
would watch.

Batiatus grins.

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CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

And I would give pleasure to your eyes...

He turns the Slave Girl over and enters her roughly. She gasps in pain, biting her lip. Lucretia sips from a cup of wine, taking in the show.

LUCRETIA

The Thracian's wife concerns me. The promise of finding her was the only thing that has kept him in check. What if her presence reverts him to his Thracian ways, and thoughts of defiance?

BATIATUS

It will not.

LUCRETIA

How can you be sure?

BATIATUS

You saw his tears of gratitude.

LUCRETIA

Gratitude falls short of loyalty. He is not the man that Crixus is.

BATIATUS

And Crixus is not the man he was, and may never be again. Spartacus will be reunited with his wife. And in the act... I will bind him to me and this ludus... Until the gods claim us all...

OFF Batiatus, thrusting with increasing intensity, his eyes gleaming with dark intent...

EXT. CLIFF - TRAINING SQUARE - DAWN

LIGHTNING FLASHES across the stormy skies. Spartacus steps into FRAME. He stands at the cliff, looking out across the rain-soaked horizon as the sun rises. SURA'S BINDING is in his hand, absently considered between his fingers.

VARRO (O.S.)

How will you save us?

Spartacus glances over as Varro joins him.

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CONTINUED:

VARRO

From the rain. Your victory splits the skies. How will you close them before we all drown?

SPARTACUS

You believe the rest of the fools, then? That I am blessed by the gods?

VARRO

Miracles do take habit of shooting out of your ass.

Spartacus can't help but smile. Varro joins him, looking out across mountains.

VARRO (cont'd)

I've heard whispers of yet more divine providence. Your wife. Is it true?

SPARTACUS

She speeds to my arms from Neapolis.

Varro beams, the news warming his heart.

VARRO

And still you doubt the gods favor you.

SPARTACUS

If what Sura has been forced to endure is parcel of their favor, I would rather they turn their back to me. If they exist at all.

VARRO

She comes. That is all that matters now.

Spartacus nods, something beyond her arrival weighing heavy as his eyes settle back on the horizon.

SPARTACUS

You once lived free in these lands. From which way does she travel?

VARRO

(pointing)
The port in Neapolis lies in that direction.

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CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

Are there roads to the mountains
that head east?

VARRO

Several.

SPARTACUS

Which are the most sparsely
traveled?

Varro eyes Spartacus, suspicion rising.

VARRO

An odd question, removed from the
subject.

SPARTACUS

Not so far astray.

VARRO

(lowered voice)
Yes, some are sparsely traveled.
But not to the point of the new
Champion of Fucking Capua going
unnoticed, if overcome by
questionable thoughts.

SPARTACUS

How long before you think Batiatus
would allow me to buy our freedom?
How many years would she be
condemned to bow and scrape?

VARRO

Is death the alternative? Move to
escape these walls, and that is all
you will find.

SPARTACUS

Has no one ever attempted such a
thing?

VARRO

And lived? No. It is a thing born
of the impossible.

SPARTACUS

The same was said of defeating
Theokoles.

Varro considers that with a frown.

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CONTINUED:

VARRO

You have a plan, then?

SPARTACUS

One begins to take shape...

The background SHIFTS behind Spartacus, becoming a slaughterhouse of violence as we TRANSITION TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - MORNING (FLASHFORWARD)

TIME SLOWS AND ACCELERATES as Spartacus slaughters his way through GUARDS, his sword spraying BLOOD and severing LIMBS. SURA struggles with a Guard across the square by the front gate, a KNIFE to her THROAT.

A BURLY GUARD

intercepts Spartacus, who slices him open in a GEYSER OF BLOOD. BURLY GUARD falls, DEAD. Spartacus rears back and

HURLS HIS SWORD

at the Guard holding Sura. The blade SLAMS INTO THE GUARD'S FACE, freeing Sura. She yanks the gory sword free and hacks and slashes the few remaining Guards that rush in.

SPARTACUS

surges forward, helping her. The last man falls, joining dozens of bodies littering the square. Blood-splattered from the battle, Spartacus and Sura embrace, their lips finding each other's at last.

VARRO (V.O.)

That's your plan?

EXT. CLIFF - TRAINING SQUARE - SUNSET

RESUME Spartacus and Varro.

VARRO

I fear it malformed.

SPARTACUS

In what way?

VARRO

Weapons, to begin.

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CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

In large supply at a ludus.

VARRO

Yet kept by lock and key. You believe the gods will drop one from the sky along with the rain?

SPARTACUS

I believe in opportunity. And the power of reason to seize upon it.

VARRO

Fair enough. Say you somehow "reason" up a weapon. What of a horse? You'll never reach the mountains without one.

SPARTACUS

Dominus provides one. Sura arrives by cart...

Spartacus smiles grimly, the background once again shifting to --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - MORNING (FLASHFORWARD)

A bloodied Spartacus sits astride a HORSE recently liberated from a SLAVE CART by the front gate. He reaches down and grabs Sura's hand, swinging her up behind him. He yanks the reins, the horse WIPING US TO --

EXT. CLIFF - TRAINING SQUARE - DAWN

RESUME Spartacus and Varro.

VARRO

It won't matter. Weapons, horses -- they are the least of your concerns.

SPARTACUS

And the greatest?

VARRO

The one man that could stop you...

The background SHIFTS behind Varro, becoming a slaughterhouse of violence as we TRANSITION TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - MORNING (FLASHFORWARD)

The Burly Guard intercepts Spartacus, who slices him open in a GEYSER OF BLOOD. Burly Guard falls, DEAD. Spartacus rears back to hurl his sword at the Guard holding Sura, but

A WHIP LASHES

around his wrist and YANKS him back, off his feet. Reveal Doctore in all his low-angle, escape-foiling glory. He glares down as Guards descend on Spartacus with their swords. BLOOD SPRAYS. Spartacus lives just long enough to see --

SURA'S THROAT SLIT

by the Guard holding her. Blood and tears flow. Her dead body falls out of FRAME, WIPING US TO --

EXT. CLIFF - TRAINING SQUARE - DAWN

Spartacus considers the outcome with a heavy heart, his eyes glancing behind him to find Doctore consulting with two GUARDS across the square.

SPARTACUS

I had not considered him.

VARRO

You have not considered many things. Take pause, I beg of you.

A beat as Spartacus struggles with alternate possibilities, finds none.

SPARTACUS

No. We will have our freedom. I will hold her in my arms, and hear her speak my name.

(locking eyes)

My name. Not the one the Romans branded me with.

VARRO

(pained)

I cannot help you in this.

SPARTACUS

I would not ask it.

VARRO

If it weren't for my own family...

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CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

Give it no thought.

VARRO

Is there nothing I can say to turn you from this path?

SPARTACUS

Nothing.

VARRO

Then may the gods you don't believe in favor you.

Varro moves away. OFF Spartacus, grimly realizing the mounting impossibility of his task...

EXT. MARKETPLACE - CAPUA - DAY

Alive with the hustle and flow of commerce despite the drizzle. A MERCHANT moves past with a push cart, passing a small KNOT OF GAWKERS outside of an ARMORY STALL.

Spartacus stands resplendent in a new breastplate, grieves, and forearm guards, a gleaming sword gripped in each hand. Batiatus takes him in with a smile, Doctore close by. Ashur lurks further back.

BATIATUS

A fine figure, is he not?

DOCTORE

A god among men.

Spartacus forces a smile, uncomfortable at being praised by the men he may soon be forced to kill.

BATIATUS

More magnificent armor I have never beheld.

Sensing an opportunity, Spartacus shifts to Batiatus.

SPARTACUS

If you grant permission, I would wear it upon my wife's arrival.

BATIATUS

A move to impress?

SPARTACUS

She will marvel at the sight.

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - MORNING (FLASHFORWARD)

On Spartacus as the Burly Guard's SWORD deflects off his GLEAMING NEW BREASTPLATE. He hacks the man with TWIN SWORDS, blood splattering as he bellows in triumph.

SMASH BACK TO:

EXT. ARMOR STALL/MARKETPLACE - DAY

Batiatus laughs, unaware of Spartacus' true reason for the request.

BATIATUS

A man must appear his best in the eyes of love. You may wear it. And I will even stand by your side to welcome her into your arms. The swords, however...

SPARTACUS

What need would I have of them?

Spartacus hands the swords to Doctore, a brief flash of reluctance clouding his face as he does.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS (O.S.)

Can it be?!

Spartacus looks over to find a wet MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS and his fourteen-year-old son NUMERIUS approaching. An ESCORT OF GUARDS makes room, dispersing the Gawkers.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

The legend himself among us?!

BATIATUS

Magistrate Calavius! Good fortune to find you here.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

The fortune is mine! My son Numerius cannot cease his talk of Spartacus and his victory over Theokoles. He demanded trip to market to claim something of Thrace to your man's honor.

(to Numerius)

Show him.

Numerius steps forward, eyes wide with awe. He pulls a KNIFE from his cumbersome, ornate BELT to show Spartacus. A thin

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CONTINUED:

blade, the kind that can be concealed in a boot or arm guard.

BATIATUS

A fine blade!

NUMERIUS

The merchant said it was a warrior's weapon.

SPARTACUS

As it well is. See these marks? Thracians notch their hilts. One for every kill.

CLOSE ON: THE HILT, a dozen SLASHES carved in it.

NUMERIUS

How many made to yours after slaying Theokoles? He must have been worth ten at least! If I could wield a sword half as well you...

Spartacus glances at the knife, a thought quickly taking hold.

SPARTACUS

Join us at my master's ludus. I will teach you the blow that brought death to the Shadow.

BATIATUS

A splendid notion!

NUMERIUS

Father...?

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Perhaps a visit later this afternoon.

Numerius beams.

BATIATUS

Why make the boy suffer with anticipation? Join us presently.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Joy must be delayed in favor of sorrow. I attend to matters regarding my cousin's murder.

Ashur perks up, listening intently.

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CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

Good Ovidius. The heart constricts
at the thought.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

And swells with the promise of
vengeance. Numerius! Come!

(to Batiatus)

Your generous hospitality will be
welcomed shortly.

Batiatus bows slightly as the Magistrate heads off with his
excited son. Batiatus takes Spartacus in with pursed lips.

BATIATUS

An invitation to school the
Magistrate's son?

Spartacus tenses. Is Batiatus on to him?

SPARTACUS

Apologies, if offered out of turn.

Batiatus breaks into a huge grin.

BATIATUS

Fuck apologies! Shrewd maneuvering,
if ever I saw it! Jupiter's cock, I
will make a Roman out of you yet!

Spartacus musters an accepting grin. OFF his relief...

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

CLOSE ON CRIXUS, asleep yet in obvious pain. A HAND reaches
down to stroke his face. ADJUST to find Lucretia standing
over him. Naevia and two GUARDS in the background.

LUCRETIA

Should his eyes not be opened?

She glances over to the Medicus.

MEDICUS

Calm is needed to heal the wound. I
keep him at rest with herb.

He indicates a table near Crixus where candles burn next to
a clutch of small, multicolored jars.

LUCRETIA

He will recover?

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CONTINUED:

MEDICUS

I have done what I can. It rests
in the hands of the gods.

LUCRETIA

No. His life now rests in your
hands. And I will see them parted
from your fucking body should he
die.

Lucretia sweeps out. Naevia steals a worried glance at
Crixus before following, WIPING US TO --

EXT. MARKETPLACE - CAPUA - DAY

Batiatus moves through the rain with Spartacus. Ashur and
Doctore follow. The crowd points and gawks at Spartacus as
he passes.

BATIATUS

See how they look at you? My
father had many champions, but none
to rival the great Spartacus! You
can almost smell the coins dropping
into our purse.

Doctore frowns at that base commercialism, unseen by
Batiatus.

SPARTACUS

If I may, what remains of my own
coin, after Sura's transport?

BATIATUS

You wish to buy something for your
wife, to honor her arrival? The
wares in this market are for proper
Romans. They would not suit a
slave.

Spartacus tries not to bristle at that.

SPARTACUS

I ask not for her, but for the men.
Wine and women, in celebration of
my victory.

Ashur perks up, wheels turning.

DOCTORE

A noble gesture, to be much
appreciated.

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CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

(to Spartacus)

You pay with your own coin, yet their happiness is also of benefit to me.

(a grin)

I am shrewd as well. Let it be done.

ASHUR

Marcellus is of sound choice towards the vice. Shall I make arrangement?

Batiatus hands him a small purse of coins.

BATIATUS

(SOFT)

See that there is ample remainder.

Ashur nods with a grin and hobbles off. Follow him to

THE STALL OF MARCELLUS,

the man he accosted with Barca in episode 105. Marcellus tenses at the sight of him.

MARCELLUS

More threats then, is it?

ASHUR

No. Coin, to the purpose of wine and whores. Enough to wet tongue and cock of my master's men.

(soft)

And a large matter of debt to the gladiator Barca, that I would ask assistance with...

OFF Ashur's obvious distress over his debt to Barca...

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

WOODEN SWORDS COLLIDE. Pull back to reveal Spartacus running Numerius through a practice routine. Numerius misses a parry, grunts in frustration as he loses his sword.

NUMERIUS

I have no hand for this.

Spartacus nods to Numerius' belt that carries his knife and the adornments to his robe.

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CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

Your belt and adornments. They hinder your purpose.

NUMERIUS

Your armor is heavy and yet you move swiftly.

SPARTACUS

In time, so will you. But a true warrior needs only a sword to cleave his fate.

Numerius takes his belt and adornments off, leaving him dressed only in a tunic. Spartacus' eyes flick to the knife as Numerius picks up the practice sword, swings it through the air.

NUMERIUS

I see your meaning. Let us go again. Play Theokoles, and I will attempt to bring the rains...

Batiatus, Magistrate Calavius, and Lucretia watch from across the room. Naevia serves wine.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Apologies for our late arrival. My inquiry at my cousin's villa was...overwhelming.

BATIATUS

How did you fare?

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

As well as expected when walking on dead relatives.

LUCRETIA

(changing the subject)

Your son is quick to study with a sword.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Born of a fascination with gladiators. His fifteenth birthday approaches, and my ears are assaulted with request for a pair to show demonstration at his party. I had thought to engage Solonius' men, but his wares have fallen from

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS (cont'd)
 fashion since your victory over
 Theokoles.

BATIATUS
 (re: Spartacus)
 It seems your son has a taste for
 what is in favor.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS
 And I would see him well fed.

BATIATUS
 Come. Let us negotiate the price of
 the meal.

Batiatus starts to move off with Calavius, pauses as two
 GUARDS enter with a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER
 Begging pardon, Dominus. I bring
 word of great import to Magistrate
 Calavius.

The Messenger hands a SCROLL to Calavius, who cracks the
 seal.

BATIATUS
 An important man, seldom out of
 reach of public matters!

Calavius stiffens at what he reads.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS
 The matter strikes more personal.
 Ovidius' boy yet lives!

Numerius breaks off with Spartacus, eyes full of excitement.

NUMERIUS
 Is it true?

LUCRETIA
 The news is fantastic. How can it
 be?

Lucretia shares a concerned look with Batiatus. They are
 fucked.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS
 By Jupiter's blessing. He was
 discovered miles north of Capua,
 wandering the road!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

What of his words? Did he describe
the horrors? How he came to survive
--

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Details not yet clear. Numerius,
come!

Numerius jumps to follow.

SPARTACUS

Do not forget your things.

Spartacus bundles Numerius' adornments round his BELT,
handing them back to the boy.

NUMERIUS

Gratitude for the lesson. It was an
honor --

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Numerius!

Numerius hustles after his father. As Spartacus watches him
go, drop back behind him to reveal he's PALMED NUMERIUS'
THRACIAN KNIFE. OFF the gleaming blade...

INT. OFFICE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Batiatus sweeps the contents of his desk to the floor in
blind rage. Lucretia glowers.

LUCRETIA

How could the boy be alive?

BATIATUS

He could not.

LUCRETIA

Your eyes held his death?

BATIATUS

No. I left the deed to Barca's
hands.

ANGLE ON Ashur, listening in the shadows just outside the
doorway.

LUCRETIA

And our lives as well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ashur enters.

ASHUR

Apologies for the intrusion.
Provisions for the celebration
arrive.

BATIATUS

To cunt with celebration! The Beast
of fucking Carthage betrays us and
you bray of wine and whores!

ASHUR

Barca? The man has always been
loyal.

LUCRETIA

As a snake to the breast. The son
of Ovidius lives.

ASHUR

Unfortunate news.
(to Batiatus)
Would the boy know your face?

BATIATUS

I was in shadow. But Barca was
clearly revealed.

ASHUR

I cannot believe he would betray
you.
(worried)
And yet...

LUCRETIA

If you have knowledge, bring it to
light.

ASHUR

(reluctantly)
Barca made wager against Theokoles,
winning sizeable coin. I overheard
him whisper to Pietros intentions
to buy their freedom with it.

BATIATUS

Barca has never mentioned desire to
leave these walls.

LUCRETIA

He seeks to fly before discovery.
If the boy is allowed to look upon
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
his face, he will be known as your
man.

BATIATUS
(to Ashur)
Gather proper guard and return with
Barca. I will hear truth spilled
from his mouth.

ASHUR
When a man is pressed, lies flow
with greater ease.

LUCRETIA
End him and be done with it.

BATIATUS
Not before I gaze into his eyes,
and know if treachery lurks within.

ASHUR
(thinking fast)
Perhaps there is another path to
illumination. One traveled by more
delicate sensibilities....

OFF Ashur's "helpful" grin...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a CASK OF WINE as it's cracked open. Gladiators fill their cups as the dark liquid spews. WHORES, both male and female, mingle among the men, laughing and fucking in the rain. Spartacus watches, detached. Varro slides up next to him, surveying the debauchery.

VARRO
Tomorrow the men will be slow from
drink.

Spartacus spots some of the GUARDS sneaking a drink.

SPARTACUS
Half the guards with them.

VARRO
(frowns)
There is one that does not partake
in your joyous offerings...

Spartacus follows Varro's eyes to Doctore, who passes by into the ludus without drink or company.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRO (cont'd)
A man of higher principle, not so
easily distracted.

Spartacus considers that, wheels turning.

SPARTACUS
How does Crixus fare?

VARRO
Adrift in the land of dreams.

SPARTACUS
Kept there yet by the Medicus?

VARRO
In hopes of recovery.

SPARTACUS
(a beat)
I would pay my respects.

Spartacus moves off, gathering two cups of wine as he goes.
A clutch of Gladiators break into song in his honor.

GLADIATORS
(singing)
The blood rains down From an angry
sky His cock rages on His cock
rages on...

He passes Barca, who has Pietros in his lap. He holds a cup
to the boy's lip as he sings with the men. Pietros sputters,
laughing.

PIETROS
You drown me!

BARCA
In more than just wine...

Barca pulls him into a hungry kiss. A SHADOW falls over
them. Two Guards from the villa loom.

GUARD
Pietros. You are summoned.

OFF Pietros, his joy shifting into uncertainty...

INT. INFIRMARY - BATTIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Crixus lies feverish, unconscious but obviously suffering. The noise from the celebration sounds from outside.

GLADIATORS (O.S.)

(singing)

Till death is found His sword
swinging hot His cock standing hard
His cock standing hard...

A shadow falls across Crixus. Reveal Spartacus having just entered with his cups of wine. He considers Crixus for a moment, then his eyes fall to jars of herbs used to treat him on the table nearby.

MEDICUS

What are you doing?

Spartacus turns to find the Medicus appearing from the shadows. Spartacus instantly shifts into a celebratory grin.

SPARTACUS

I come to share drink with my
partner in victory!

MEDICUS

Pay your respects and be gone, he
needs rest. And keep that fucking
wine from his lips.

Medicus steps over a passed-out Guard with a cup in his hand as he moves to the apothecary across the room. Spartacus sets his cups down next to the herb jar. He frowns, not knowing which one he seeks. He glances at the Medicus, forming a plan. He turns to Crixus, loud with "mirth".

SPARTACUS

Without you, brother, my blood
would have fallen in the arena
instead of rain! May the gods
forever honor Crixus, the
Undefeated Gaul!

He leans in close, whispering.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

And forgive the pain I cause.

He suddenly presses down hard on Crixus' stomach wound. Crixus screams. Still half out, he thrashes in agony. The Medicus rushes over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEDICUS

Move aside!

(examining)

His wound has reopened. The blue
jar! Quickly!

Spartacus hands him the blue jar. The Medicus takes it, quickly dropping several pinches of powdered herb into a cup of water.

SPARTACUS

Will this heal him?

MEDICUS

No. But it will calm him to sleep
so I may seal the wound.

The Medicus shoves the jar back into Spartacus' hands, turning his attention back to Crixus as he forces him to drink. Spartacus furtively scoops a bit of the powder out as he returns the jar to its place, then dumps it into one of his wine cups.

SPARTACUS

Will he be all right?

MEDICUS

Get the fuck out!

Spartacus nods solemnly as he takes his cups and turns to exit into the ludus corridors. OFF his grim smile as he
WIPES US TO --

INT. TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a cup of wine being poured from an ornate jug. PULL BACK to reveal Batiatus as he hands it to a nervous Pietros. The Guards loom in the background.

PIETROS

(re: wine)

I have drank too much wine
already...

BATIATUS

None of worth. This is Falernian,
not the base swill flowing below
us.

Pietros' eyes light up. He drinks, thrilled at the taste.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIETROS

It tastes of the gods.

BATIATUS

And brings us closer to them.

(refilling cup)

How fares Barca?

PIETROS

In happy spirits, as are all the men.

Batiatus hesitates, making a show of uncertainty.

BATIATUS

Is your confidence to be trusted?

PIETROS

Yes, Dominus.

BATIATUS

Several days ago, I was forced into retribution against Ovidius, the grain merchant. He had made attempt on my life in the Pits. The man was a danger, and needed to be handled accordingly. You understand?

Pietros nods.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Now rumors abound that more than Ovidius gave up their lives. His entire house, slain. Even a child. The others I can put from mind. But the boy... It troubles my conscience. If Barca exceeded my orders and laid hand to such an act...

PIETROS

He did not kill the boy.

BATIATUS

(a beat)

Perhaps you only tell me what I wish to hear.

PIETROS

No. Barca told me so himself. He swore he could never harm a child.

Batiatus gauges that, smiles warmly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

This gives reason to put conscience
to rest.

PIETROS

He will be pleased to know.

BATIATUS

Hold it from him yet a while. I do
not wish to taint the celebration
with such dark thoughts.

PIETROS

Yes, Dominus.

Batiatus waves the Guards over to return Pietros to the
ludus.

BATIATUS

Pietros?

Pietros pauses.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Thank you for your honesty.

Pietros breaks into a proud grin, nods as he moves off.
Batiatus darkens. Ashur appears from the shadows.

ASHUR

The true nature of the man
revealed. I would not have thought
it of him.

BATIATUS

Let Barca hoist his cup. When his
wits are damp with wine, I will see
him rewarded for his loyalty.

OFF the ominous proclamation...

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus, both cups of wine in hand, steps over several
Gladiators entwined with whores on the ground. The sound of
the partying grows quieter as he moves deeper into the
ludus, coming to the gateway of --

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

Doctore kneels in front of a small ALTAR with RELIGIOUS RELICS on them. He's deep in prayer. The sounds from the party are faint. Spartacus stands in the doorway, regret filling his eyes for what he's about to do. Doctore pauses, sensing Spartacus.

DOCTORE
You smell of wine.

SPARTACUS
I bring cups, full of celebration.

Doctore stands, takes the dosed cup with a smile. Spartacus forces one in response.

DOCTORE
I honor your victory. With prayer.

He sets the cup down near his shrine. Spartacus eyes it tensely.

SPARTACUS
Your instruction made possible
reunion with my wife. I would raise
cups in gratitude.

DOCTORE
The sentiment is well received. But
wine has not passed my lips for
many years.

SPARTACUS
(glancing at shrine)
Your gods forbid it?

DOCTORE
No. It is a matter of discipline.

SPARTACUS
(laughs)
Sura always cautioned me towards
the same.

DOCTORE
A wise woman.

SPARTACUS
Well beyond the station of her
husband. If she had not come into
my life...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

And now she returns. The gods have truly blessed you.

SPARTACUS

She would say the same.

DOCTORE

And you?

SPARTACUS

The gods and I do not tread common ground. Although she made effort many times to place us at even footing.

DOCTORE

Wise and understanding. To love a man despite his shortcomings...

Doctore smiles wryly.

SPARTACUS

She is the only reason my heart beats within my chest.

A bit of sadness tinges Doctore's smile.

DOCTORE

To find love such as this... A rare and fortunate thing.

Spartacus picks up on that.

SPARTACUS

You speak from knowledge?

Doctore's eyes fall on the shrine.

DOCTORE

A wife of my own. The thought of her ever upon my mind.

SPARTACUS

Does she live?

DOCTORE

In memory.

Spartacus nods, the weight of that heavy in the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

I would have desired to meet her.
And tell her of her husband's
worth.

Spartacus picks up the cup of drugged wine.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

Apologies for disturbing your
prayers.

He heads out. Doctore stops him.

DOCTORE

Spartacus.

(a beat)

I cannot drink to victory. But to
your wife, and her joyous return...

He takes the drugged cup from Spartacus' hand.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Discipline gives way to the moment.

Doctore raises his cup. Spartacus follows suit.

SPARTACUS

You honor us.

Doctore drinks. OFF Spartacus as he sips, eyes brimming with
emotion from betraying this noble man...

INT. MESS HALL - BATTIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

The celebration is in full bacchanalian swing. Men drink and
play dice and bones. Rhaskos fucks a FAT WHORE from behind
as he throws. Varro, watching the game but not playing,
groans at the bad throw. Hamilcar laughs, scooping the dice
and offering them to Varro.

VARRO

eyes them hungrily, but shakes his head and moves off,
resisting the temptation. He passes a drunken Barca entwined
with

BARCA

What did the Dominus require?

PIETROS

Nothing of import...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He kisses Barca passionately.

BARCA
You kiss with purpose.

PIETROS
The thought of freedom...

He devours Barca's lips. Barca responds, starts to undo his own subligaria. Neither one sees Ashur appear from the shadows. He frowns at the display, clears his throat. Barca glances over.

ASHUR
A word, if I may.

BARCA
Fuck your words, unless coupled with coin.

ASHUR
The very matter I wish to discuss.

ASHUR (cont'd)
I secured a sizeable loan from good Marcellus, to cover your winnings. The terms of interest were outrageous, but --

BARCA
Give it here.

ASHUR
Marcellus brings it when he collects his whores in the morning.

Barca darkens, stands.

BARCA
You interrupt my cock with empty hands?

ASHUR
And intelligence. Batiatus knows of your desire for freedom, and makes noise of discussing terms. Your skills, while impressive in the arena, lack a certain gentle touch in the art of negotiation. I offer to bargain a better price from Batiatus for your release. Half the difference to be subtracted from my debt to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Barca glances to Pietros, who breaks into a smile.

ASHUR (cont'd)
Batiatus is in agreeable spirits.
If we move with haste...

BARCA
Let us go and call him Dominus. For
the final time.

OFF a happy Pietros, as he watches Barca and Ashur head
upstairs to negotiate their freedom...

INT. TROPHY ROOM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Shrouded in shadow. Ashur leads Barca in, staying behind
him. Batiatus is looking at a MARBLE BUST of one of his
grandfather's gladiators.

BATIATUS
I hear whispers you seek freedom.

BARCA
(nods with a grin)
Ashur represents me in the
discussion.

BATIATUS
Discussion?

Batiatus turns to Barca, his face half in the shadows.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
None to be had on the matter. The
bond between slave and master has
already been dissolved...

Barca breaks into a grin, misunderstanding.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
...the moment you disobeyed me.

BARCA
(confused)
Disobeyed?

BATIATUS
The son of Ovidius lives.

Barca laughs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARCA

Impossible.

BATIATUS

The Magistrate rides to retrieve him. Yet breathing, small fingers trembling to reveal the beast that took his family.

Batiatus points at Barca. Barca's smile fades.

BARCA

This cannot be. My hands upon his throat, I felt his life flee from his body.

BATIATUS

Your lover spoke otherwise.

BARCA

Pietros?

BATIATUS

You told him the boy lives. Did you not?

Barca tenses.

BARCA

I did. But only to calm him. If he knew the child's blood stained my hands...

BATIATUS

So you lied to him?

Ashur sees the conversation heading in the wrong direction, moves to right it.

ASHUR

Or he lies to you now.

Barca glares.

BATIATUS

Either way, there seems to be a serious issue of trust.

Batiatus motions. GUARDS, all armed with swords, appear from the shadows. Ashur slips a DAGGER from his belt.

BARCA

Dominus --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Batiatus turns his back as Ashur attacks, literally stabbing Barca in the back. Barca grunts in pain. He whirls, slamming Ashur back into a GLADIATOR BUST. The bust topples, smashing to the floor.

THE GUARDS ATTACK,

Guard #1 slicing Barca across the arm. Barca avoids a second blow, kicks Guard #1 into the other men. Using the distraction, he makes a break for it.

BATIATUS

Stop him!

INT. VESTIBULE - BATIATUS' VILLA - CONTINUOUS

Barca rushes into the atrium. Two more GUARDS sweep in, cutting off escape. Barca avoids their swords, disarms one, uses the weapon to slice them both open.

LUCRETIA

appears across the room, a stunned Naevia next to her. Barca locks eyes with her, his face bloodied and panicked. He doesn't see

ANOTHER GUARD

coming in behind him. The Guard swings his sword, SLICING OPEN Barca's back. TIME SLOWS as blood sprays. Barca grunts in pain, turning to engage the man. The other Guards from the Trophy Room move in.

BATIATUS AND ASHUR

watch as the men hack at Barca. Blood sprays, but the giant refuses to fall. INTERCUT the slow motion assault with --

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

SLOW MOTION. Doctore SLUMPS to the ground. Out cold. The empty cup falls from his limp hand.

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

SLOW MOTION. Spartacus heads away from Doctore's cell. He passes two GLADIATORS engaged in a THREESOME with a half naked whore.

INT. MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

SLOW MOTION. Spartacus passes Gladiators and Guards as they drink, fuck, and gamble. Pietros drinks and laughs, waiting for Barca to return with news of freedom.

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

SLOW MOTION. Barca, BLOODIED AND EXHAUSTED, collapses to his knees at the foot of the pool. His sword tumbles from his hand.

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

SLOW MOTION. A half-drunk Varro sits against a training dummy. He locks eyes with Spartacus, questioning. Spartacus turns away as he heads for his cell.

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

SLOW MOTION. Batiatus draws a KNIFE from his robes. He slides in behind Barca and pulls his head back by the hair, exposing his throat. BACK TO SPEED. He leans in, whispering in his ear.

BATIATUS

You are free.

Batiatus slits Barca's throat in a spray of blood. Ashur smiles as the giant falls face first into the pool. Blood spreads around him in crimson swirls.

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON SURA'S BINDING, gripped in Spartacus' hand. ADJUST TO REVEAL Spartacus standing in the doorway of his cell, looking out across the training square. The life he will soon leave behind. He closes his cell door, PLUNGING US INTO DARKNESS and ENDING THE SEQUENCE.

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Lucretia looms over a frightened Naevia. Batiatus washes the blood from his hands in a bowl of water in the background. Blood stains his tunic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

Barca purchased his freedom. We wished him well and escorted him through the gates of the villa. Do you understand?

NAEVIA

(soft)
Yes, Domina.

Lucretia grabs her wrist, twisting a bit. Naevia gasps in pain.

LUCRETIA

Do you understand?

NAEVIA

Yes!

SOUNDS OF A COMMOTION from the Atrium.

BATIATUS

Juno's cunt! What now?!

Batiatus strides out, taking us to --

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - CONTINUOUS

Batiatus storms out with Lucretia in tow, freezes as he spots Magistrate Calavius and his Guards pushing past Batiatus' Guards.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Give fucking way!
(spotting Batiatus)
Batiatus!

Calavius strides over with his men, furious. Lucretia tenses.

BATIATUS

Magistrate. You call at unexpected hour.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS

Drawn by matters that will not wait for dawn.

Calavius pauses, his eyes falling on the blood staining Batiatus' robe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS (cont'd)
What new offense is this?

BATIATUS
Nothing. A disobedient slave,
freshly corrected.

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS
Not the only wretch deserving of
blood this night. I am just now
returned from the promise of
reunion with Ovidius' son, and
would have words with a man seen in
your house.

Batiatus steels himself for what he knows is about to come.

BATIATUS
Which man do you speak of?

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS
The messenger that filled my heart
with false hope.

Batiatus is stunned, shares a look with Lucretia.

BATIATUS
Messenger?

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS
Ovidius' child was never found upon
any road. Returning to the city,
news reached us that his body has
been discovered among the ashes of
my cousin's villa.

LUCRETIA
(realizing)
The messenger lied...

MAGISTRATE CALAVIUS
I would have knowledge of the
reason, along with the fool's
tongue.

BATIATUS
We shall exhaust every effort,
until the villain is discovered.

OFF the proclamation...

INT. MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAWN

Ashur slips a small purse of coins into the hands of Marcellus, there to collect his whores. Passed out Gladiators litter the ground. Weary whores disentangle.

ASHUR
(voice lowered)
Coin. Paired with gratitude.

MARCELLUS
The messenger had the desired effect, then?

ASHUR
My concerns have been laid to rest, sharing grave with Barca and his thirst for winnings.
(beat)
There is no chance the Magistrate will deduce the source of the message?

MARCELLUS
Not unless Hades speaks of it from the underworld. The messenger has been put to grass.

ASHUR
And you will follow, if word of this transaction parts your lips again.

Ashur moves off. OFF Marcellus as he glares after him, spitting in contempt.

INT. CORRIDORS - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAWN

Ashur hobbles along, stepping over drunken men. Gnaeus looks up in a stupor.

GNAEUS
I shit myself.

Ashur glowers, continues on past Barca's cell. Pietros comes out. He looks exhausted, like he's been waiting up all night.

PIETROS
Ashur?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR
 (all smiles)
 Young Pietros! How does the day
 find you?

PIETROS
 As the night, filled with worry.
 Barca never returned.

ASHUR
 Nor will he. He has his freedom.

PIETROS
 (stunned)
 Freedom?

ASHUR
 Purchased from our Dominus. I could
 barely keep pace as we saw him to
 the gates.

PIETROS
 He is gone? But he was to take me
 with him.

ASHUR
 The price of freedom was too steep
 for the both of you. But do not
 worry. Barca will find another
 tight hole to sit on his cock. One
 he doesn't have to pay for.

Tears well in Pietros' eyes. Ashur hobbles off, his grin
 broadening as he WIPES US TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAWN

Spartacus stands at the edge of the cliff, Sura's binding in
 his hand. Varro joins him, severely hung over.

VARRO
 Jupiter's cock, my head. I can
 barely stand for want of vomit.

SPARTACUS
 You are in large company.

Varro casts an eye across the square. Marcellus is heading
 out with his prostitutes. A few Gladiators are passed out
 here and there. And the Guards aren't at their usual posts.
 Varro grunts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRO

No one in condition to halt a man
of purpose.

SPARTACUS

Such by design.

VARRO

(with a frown)
Doctore is usually up before the
sun, whip in hand.

(a beat)

Will he ever rise again?

SPARTACUS

He will. But not for many hours.

VARRO

Your chances improve, then.

SPARTACUS

To the point of certainty.

VARRO

Nothing is ever so. Even if you
ride beyond the gates, the guards
will pursue.

SPARTACUS

They will be commanded against such
action.

VARRO

(laughs)

You really expect them to obey you?

SPARTACUS

No. I expect them to obey their
master...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - 43 DAY
(FLASHFORWARD)

SLOW MOTION. GUARDS rush past the bloodied, dead bodies of
their comrades littering the square. They suddenly halt at
the sight of Spartacus holding Numerius' Thracian knife to
Batiatus' throat. Sura, bloodied and defiant with sword in
hand, is by her husband's side. Batiatus screams out a slow
motion order, terrified (no sound).

BATIATUS

Drop your fucking swords! Do it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Guards comply. As their swords crash to the wet sand, we
FLASH BACK TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAWN

Spartacus continues his explanation to Varro.

SPARTACUS

I will release him when we are in
the cover of the mountains.

BATIATUS (O.S.)

Spartacus!

They turn, startled to find Batiatus looking down at them
from the BALCONY. But instead of retribution, they receive a
broad smile. He hasn't heard them.

BATIATUS

Your wife's cart appears upon the
road! I will join you presently!

Batiatus turns and enters the Villa. Varro remembers to
breathe.

VARRO

I urge you to reconsider one last
time.

SPARTACUS

Sura will be free. In this life, or
the one after, with her husband by
her side.

VARRO

May the gods see you both upon the
plains of Thrace.

They grip forearms in a manly goodbye. Spartacus heads for
his cell, WIPING US TO --

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Lucretia stands at the edge of the pool, looking down at the
now clear waters, lost in thought. Batiatus approaches.

BATIATUS

The Thracian's wife nears.

She nods absently, her eyes never leaving the pool.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

The pool is clear. As if it never happened.

BATIATUS

A regrettable misunderstanding.

LUCRETIA

One I pray the gods will overlook.
The man was yet loyal.

BATIATUS

He wished for freedom. A betrayal
in itself. Come. Let us rejoice in
happier thoughts.

They begin moving off.

LUCRETIA

The arrival of the Thracian's
woman? How is that cause for cheer?
She will only remind him of his old
life, and the ways of an animal.

BATIATUS

Our hopes and fortunes are now tied
to Spartacus. I made a promise to
reunite him with his wife. In honor
of the man, I will keep my word.

OFF Batiatus as he sweeps out with Lucretia, WIPING US TO --

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Spartacus kneels, the purple binding in his hand as he
silently prepares himself for the escape to come. He is now
wearing the Dimachaerus armor Batiatus purchased for him.
GREAVES, FOREARM GUARDS, and the BREASTPLATE. SLOW PUSH IN
on his face, deep in thought, TAKING US TO --

EXT. THRACIAN PLAIN - DAY (FLASHFORWARD)

Sura and Spartacus stand on the plains of Thrace, happy and
free. She touches his cheek with a smile. He takes her in
his arms to kiss her. Just before their lips meet, the SOUND
of a HORSE WHINNY interrupts, SMASHING US BACK TO --

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Spartacus' eyes crash open. From outside, he hears the SOUNDS of a cart moving into the square and the gate closing. He quickly ties the purple binding around his arm and picks up the THRACIAN KNIFE. He slips it into his forearm guard, concealing it. He steels himself. Time to save Sura or die trying.

TIME SLOWS

as he pushes the door to his cell open and steps out into --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

SLOW MOTION. Spartacus steps onto the sand, eyes sweeping the square. The rain has paused. The sun breaks through the parting clouds, illuminating a stand by the gate where a small covered SLAVE CART has just arrived.

BATIATUS,

his back to Spartacus, speaks with the driver, blocking our view of him. Lucretia stands nearby with Naevia.

A FEW GUARDS

stand sentry by the gate. In their hung-over state, they will be no match for Spartacus.

GNAEUS

leans against a post, looking ill. Ashur hobbles up to witness the proceedings.

VARRO

watches nervously from the Mess Hall. He catches sight of something, tenses. His eyes flick to Spartacus, subtly alerting him to

DOCTORE

who is just coming out from the ludus. The big man does not look well -- or very happy as his suspicious eyes fall on

SPARTACUS,

who tightens his jaw at the unexpected sight. He turns his attention back to Batiatus, his pace quickening to reach the man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

steps out onto the sand, moving to meet him, but Varro "accidentally" steps into his path, slowing him down. Doctore shoves him out of the way, but the distraction served its purpose.

SPARTACUS

reaches Batiatus, his hand slipping to his forearm guard to retrieve the Thracian knife. But before he can pull it out Batiatus turns, revealing

THE DRIVER SOAKED IN BLOOD

behind him. Something is terribly wrong. STAY IN SLOW MOTION as Spartacus catches snippets of the driver's conversation with Batiatus, reaching him as if from underwater.

DRIVER

...attacked on the road... they
came out of nowhere...

SOUND FALLS OUT as Spartacus' hand drops from the hidden knife. He rushes past Batiatus to

THE REAR OF THE CART

where several dead SLAVES AND GUARDS lie inside. Spartacus' heart seizes as his eyes fall on A BLOODIED SURA,

barely clinging to life, her throat cut. Spartacus cradles her in his arms, tears spilling down his cheeks. She reaches up and touches his cheek. Unable to speak his name. She smiles at the closeness of him as the life drains from her eyes. Her hand falls away, leaving Spartacus' cheek smeared with blood.

BATIATUS TURNS AWAY

with Lucretia. A faint smile creases his lips.

BATIATUS

My word is kept. They are reunited.

Lucretia eyes him in surprise as she realizes he never intended for Sura to arrive at the ludus alive. A smile of her own builds as they disappear back into the ludus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIDE ON THE TRAINING SQUARE

as Spartacus cradles Sura's lifeless body in his arms. DARK CLOUDS close the sky above, blotting out the sun and plunging us into darkness.

END OF EPISODE

