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

(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

Batatus 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.
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.

Batius 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...

Batius 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!
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?

Batius 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 Batius. Reuniting you with your wife is but the first of many rewards.

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

(CONTINUED)
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 - B ATIATUS’ 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?
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)
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 - BATIOATUS’ 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.

(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)
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.

(CONTINUED)
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.

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?

It will not.

How can you be sure?

You saw his tears of gratitude.

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

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.

How will you save us?

Spartacus glances over as Varro joins him.
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.

(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.
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.

(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...

(CONTINUED)
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.

BATTIATUS
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.

BATTIATUS
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.

BATTIATUS
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 (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.

(_CONTINUED)
Good Ovidius. The heart constricts at the thought.

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.

An invitation to school the Magistrate’s son?

Spartacus tenses. Is Batiatus on to him?

Apologies, if offered out of turn.

Batiatus breaks into a huge grin.

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...

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.

Should his eyes not be opened?

She glances over to the 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.

He will recover?

(Continued)
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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Batiatus hands him a small purse of coins.

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

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.

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.
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)
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.

Messerer
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:

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)
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)
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 - BATIATUS’ 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)
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:

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 - BATTIATUS’ 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.

BATTIATUS
I hear whispers you seek freedom.

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

BATTIATUS
Discussion?

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

BATTIATUS (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.

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

BARCA  (confused)
Disobeyed?

BATTIATUS
The son of Ovidius lives.

Barca laughs.
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 whirs, 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)
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 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)
What new offense is this?

Nothing. A disobedient slave, freshly corrected.

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.

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

Which man do you speak of?

The messenger that filled my heart with false hope.

Batius is stunned, shares a look with Lucretia.

Messenger?

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.

(Realizing)
The messenger lied...

I would have knowledge of the reason, along with the fool’s tongue.

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)
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.
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!
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)
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

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 Batius as he sweeps out with Lucetia, Wiping US TO --

Int. Spartacus’ Cell - Batius’ 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 Batius 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)
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