Whore

Written by
Daniel Knauf
FADE IN:

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Practice swords clash as the men train under the ever watchful eye of DOCTORE. AGRON presses his younger brother DURO, hammering him. Duro takes a crack across the angry BRAND on his forearm. He GRUNTS in pain, dropping his sword.

DURO
Fuck. Two weeks and the mark is still raw as a whore’s cunt.

AGRON
I bear the same, brother. Without pissing about it.

Agron kicks the fallen sword over to him.

DURO
That’s because you have the hide of a goat. And almost as much sense.

Duro attacks. Agron meets him, half taunting him with a laugh shared only by siblings attempting to brain each other. As they battle past CAMERA, ADJUST to find SPARTACUS AND VARRO

sparring. Spartacus is a thing of physical perfection, his two practice swords slicing the air with balletic malevolence. Varro counters, brandishing sword and shield, looking for an opening. He finds one and charges, but

SPARTACUS EASILY DEFLECTS

with one sword, SMACKING Varro across the midsection with the other. Varro grunts, shaking it off. Spartacus circles him.

SPARTACUS
You lower your guard after each assault.

VARRO
I shall see it raised then...

Varro rushes, raining blows at Spartacus. Spartacus counters, each stroke sure and swift. Varro thrusts his shield out to defend. Spartacus quickly rolls off it, using his momentum to spin behind Varro and bring his sword up around his throat. He growls in his ear.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS
Your head is mine. How shall I mount it?

Varro chuckles in defeat as he pushes the sword away.

VARRO
You move well today.

SPARTACUS
You do not. What distracts you?

Varro’s mood deflates.

VARRO
I had Ashur send letter to Aurelia. More than a week past now, and no reply.

SPARTACUS
You expect different? A woman seldom rushes back to the husband who calls her whore.

VARRO
I said no such thing. (off Spartacus’ look) Not in words. (quickly) The letter was contrite. I admitted I reacted poorly to the news of her being with child.

SPARTACUS
And now she makes you wait. The way women punish us for being fools.

Spartacus gears up for another round.

SPARTACUS (cont’d)
Strike it from your mind. Or find your brains upon the sand...

Spartacus attacks, hammering Varro. They battle like fucking gods, WIPING US TO --

INT. TRICLINIUM/VILLA – BATIATUS’ VILLA – DAY

POV – MOVING past a line of SIX BEAUTIFUL NAKED SLAVE GIRLS, each wearing an exquisite WHITE MASK in the classic likenesses of Roman Goddesses.

(CONTINUED)
REVERSE TO REVEAL LICINIA (the Ilithyia-esque beauty from ep. 108). LUCRETIA stands with her, a warm smile bending her lips. NAEVIA hovers in the background.

LUCRETIA
They have been in the family for generations.

LICINIA
So this sort of arrangement happens often?

LUCRETIA
No. But when such requests are made, one must be prepared to offer only the finest quality.

LICINIA
The House of Batiatus does not fall short in that regard.

She smiles wryly, not speaking of the masks at all. Her eyes fall on one of them, striking her fancy.

LICINIA (cont'd)
This one, I think.

LUCRETIA
Diana, Goddess of the Hunt. A fine choice.

She removes the DIANA MASK, revealing MIRA, a voluptuous, sultry house slave in her mid 20’s. Lucretia hands the mask to Licinia. She considers it as she moves through the villa, heading out.

LICINIA
Do you think she would approve? When Actaeon saw her bathing, she turned the poor bastard into a stag and set her dogs upon him.

LUCRETIA
How fitting then, that you shall have a stag of your own to play with. Have you decided?
There is only one man I would invite such peril to know. I will have Spartacus.

Lucretia forces a smile.

The champion, of course.

Is that a problem? If more coin is required --

(instantly regroups) No, I would not hear of it. The cousin of Marcus Crassus deserves no less than the Slayer of Theokoles, at fair price.

Licinia pauses.

It is not the price that gives concern. If ever my husband were to hear of this...

The gods themselves would have to whisper it in his ear. We take the utmost care regarding the delicate nature of these arrangements. The mask will ensure anonymity, but you must also do your part. Tell no one. And arrive exactly at the appointed time, unencumbered.

Absent slaves or attendants?

Who may hold your husband’s loyalty truer to value. I would avoid complications, for you and this ludus.

ILITHYIA enters with her Slaves, escorted by Batiatus’ house Guards. Licinia quickly hides the mask behind her back.

Ilithyia.
ILITHYIA
Oh. Apologies. Am I early?

LUCRETIA
For what purpose?

ILITHYIA
You invited me to midday meal.

LICINIA
(not pleased)
Did you?

LUCRETIA
Yes. For tomorrow.

ILITHYIA
Oh, was it?
(laughs, to Licinia)
I pray I have not interrupted important proceedings.

LICINIA
(covering)
On the contrary. We were only just speaking of you and your gladiator. What was his name? The Celt...

ILITHYIA
Segovax.

LICINIA
Yes, Segovax. Pity. Perhaps you should buy several next time. Until you get the hang of it.

Ilithyia forces a smile. Lucretia intervenes.

LUCRETIA
It is a difficult process. Very few live to see the test, fewer still the arena. My husband demands only the best.

LICINIA
As do we all. Forgive my haste, but my own husband expects me.

She kisses Lucretia on the cheek.

LICINIA (cont'd)
I look forward to our next encounter.

(CONTINUED)
Licinia exits, giving Ilithyia a measured smile as she passes. Ilithyia eyes her as she disappears down the hall.

ILITHYIA
She favors you.

LUCRETIA
And I her.

ILITHYIA
It warms the heart, to know my hands are responsible.

LUCRETIA
Let me take them in thanks.

Lucretia takes her hands, moving to kiss her cheek. Ilithyia adjusts, kissing Lucretia on the lips.

ILITHYIA
You should be more careful.

Lucretia eyes her, not sure of her meaning. Ilithyia laughs.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
With Licinia. She is of a strata above your station, and will not hesitate to remind you of it if her mood shifts. And it shifts frequently.

Lucretia smiles, giving nothing away.

LUCRETIA
I am well versed in dealing with such people.

ILITHYIA
Of course you are.

She hooks her arm in Lucretia’s, strolling through the villa.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
Am I going to be invited?

LUCRETIA
Invited? To what?

ILITHYIA
The masquerade.

Lucretia tenses, tries to cover.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
Oh come, you think I had not noticed the mask she was attempting to conceal? Am I to be excluded, then?

LUCRETIA
You are mistaken. There is no masquerade. She merely borrows the visage of Diana.

ILITHYIA
To avoid “complications”?

Lucretia tenses. Ilithyia clocks the reaction with a grin.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
A wealthy woman of status visiting a ludus... Concealing masks and whispering of complications... If I did not know better, I would suspect intent to fuck one of your gladiators.

LUCRETIA
Ilithyia --

Ilithyia squeals in delight.

ILITHYIA
She is, isn’t she? That little whore! How positively depraved!

LUCRETIA
(panicked)
I promised discretion. You must not breathe a word of this.

Ilithyia takes Lucretia’s arm again, her eyes twinkling.

ILITHYIA
I would never think it. You have been a most valued friend. And this will be our little secret...

Ilithyia smiles warmly. Lucretia forces one of her own, knowing that Ilithyia now has the advantage over her. The only question is how she will use it...
INT. BEDCHAMBER/BATH - BATIATUS’ VILLA - DAY

BATIATUS has just come from the bath. SLAVES dry, perfume, and dress him. He frowns sourly, not caring for the news Lucretia brings.

LUCRETIA
I can control her.

BATIATUS
Ilithyia?
(snorts)
Like you did with her and Segovax? She had her own man make attempt on Spartacus, under our very roof. And you yet speak of control.

LUCRETIA
Spartacus inflames her beyond reason. Licinia is another matter. Even Ilithyia has sense enough to fear reprisal from the cousin of Marcus Crassus.

BATIATUS
As she should. Jupiter’s cock, the man shits gold! The favor of such an ally in Rome could pave my way to a seat in the senate...

LUCRETIA
There is one small obstacle. Licinia desires the touch of our champion.

BATIATUS
Spartacus? He will not be difficult.

LUCRETIA
He is always difficult.

BATIATUS
In a past that no longer exists. I shall command... and it shall be done.

He pulls her into a heated kiss, confident and in charge.
INT. TROPHY ROOM - BATIATUS’ VILLA - DAY

Two GUARDS escort Spartacus in. Batiatus meets him, waves the Guards back.

BATIATUS
The Champion of Capua arrives! A man who so terrifies Jupiter the clouds burst and the heavens weep!

SPARTACUS
My glory is but a reflection of my dominus.

BATIATUS
You flatter!

SPARTACUS
I return in kind.

Batiatus laughs, enjoying that.

BATIATUS
And the gods take notice. Just when I thought we had accrued every accolade possible, yet another falls to us from the heavens. Fair Licinia, cousin of Marcus Crassus himself, has personally requested you.

SPARTACUS
Crassus?

BATIATUS
The richest man in all the Republic.

SPARTACUS
A great honor. Who will be my opponent?

BATIATUS
Opponent?! (laughs, delighted)
Licinia has no interest in watching you fight. Her desires are of a more... intimate nature.

Spartacus takes that in with a troubled frown.

SPARTACUS
I am to lie with her?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Batiatus
And shame all men who follow.

Spartacus
(a beat)
Such things are asked of a champion?

Batiatus senses resistance.

Batiatus
They are.
(a beat)
You have concern?

A beat. Then Spartacus locks eyes with Batiatus.

Spartacus
I am the champion of Capua. I shall perform all duties required of me.

Batiatus beams, pleased at the response.

Batiatus
Bring her to satisfaction. And see our fortunes rise along with your cock.

Batiatus moves off, WIPING US TO --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS’ LUDUS - DAY

Tight on stitches being removed from a freshly healed wound.

Medicus (O.S.)
Is there discomfort?

Widen to reveal Crixus sitting on a table, being tended by the Medicus. There is obvious discomfort, but Crixus refuses to let it show.

Crixus
None.

Medicus snorts, not believing it.

Crixus (cont'd)
How long before I return to training?

(continued)
The fact that you yet walk among the living is marvel in itself. To press the blessing --

How long?

The Medicus considers the question with a frown.

A week. Perhaps two --

Tomorrow.

No. It is much too soon.

Crixus stands, looming over the Medicus.

Tomorrow.

The Medicus gauges the situation, nods.

Tomorrow, then.

A glorious day, too long in coming!

They look over to find Ashur hobbling in.

Ashur! Risen from the dead! And Ashur, finally freed of his shackles, to take up sword again!

Crixus glances at Ashur’s leg brace.

You would resume training? As a gladiator?

I yet bear the mark.

Ashur holds out his forearm, showing the brand of Batiatus: the Mark of the Brotherhood.

(Continued)
ASHUR (cont'd)  
And long to stand with my brothers, 
once more upon the sands of the 
arena.

CRIXUS  
Perhaps this time you will have 
sense to stay out of my way.

Crixus exits. Ashur glares after him, all trace of 
pleasantries replaced by thoughts of vengeance.

ASHUR  
(to Medicus)  
Take this fucking thing off me. 
Now.

The Medicus moves to comply. OFF Ashur, burning with 
hatred...

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS’ VILLA - NIGHT  
CLOSE ON LUCRETIA, lips slightly parted in absent pleasure.

LUCRETIA  
He gave you no pause?

WIDEN TO REVEAL Batiatus ramming a SLAVE GIRL from behind as 
she goes down on Lucretia. Naevia is absent.

BATIATUS  
None. Our dog... is finally 
housebroken...

LUCRETIA  
You were wise... to put down his 
bitch...

They climax together. Batiatus withdraws with a laugh, 
pushing the Slave Girl aside.

BATIATUS  
Bring us wine.

The Slave Girl exits. Batiatus nestles Lucretia, his lips 
finding hers.

BATIATUS (cont'd)  
Everything comes to plan. We shall 
have Licinia’s wet gratitude, and 
with it the ear of Marcus Crassus.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA
If Spartacus performs as promised.

BATICUS
Every breath he takes is in service to the glory of this house.

LUCRETIA
I know he is willing. But it has been many months since he last lay with a woman. After such a time, his passion may be... all too brief.

Batiatus considers that with a frown as the Slave Girl and Mira enter with the wine, pour.

BATICUS
That would prove unfortunate.

LUCRETIA
Yet easily avoided, if Spartacus were to be presented opportunity to hone his skills beforehand...

OFF Lucretia as she sips her wine, a salacious smile bending her lips...

OMITTED

INT. SPARTACUS’ CELL - BATICUS’ LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus enters his cell and freezes, tensing. REVEAL Mira, lounging naked on his bed, eyes smoldering, a sultry smile on her lips.

SPARTACUS
You have wandered to the wrong cell.

MIRA
(knowing the answer)
Are you not Spartacus? Bringer of Rain? I am Mira. I have been sent to please you.

SPARTACUS
To what end?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MIRA
Is your pleasure not an end to itself?

SPARTACUS
I do not care for games. Give your true purpose.

She hesitates. He yanks her up.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
Find your tongue!

MIRA
Domina fears it has been too long since you were last with a woman. That you will be unable to withhold your seed long enough to please the Roman woman.

A beat. Spartacus releases her. His manner softens -- but not his words.

SPARTACUS
The notion offends me. As does your presence.

He picks her garment up off the bed, shoves it into her hands. She stares at him, surprised.

MIRA
You do not desire me?

Spartacus removes his towel and climbs into bed, turning away from her.

SPARTACUS
I desire only sleep. And the absence of dreams.

He closes his eyes. She stands for a moment, uncertain, then exits, WIPPING US TO --

INT. MESS HALL/PANTRY - BATIATUS' LUDUS/VILLA - NIGHT

HECTOR, a handsome, rugged guard, unlocks the pantry gate for a now-dressed Mira. She disappears up the stairs to the villa as he locks the gate and moves off on his rounds. A beat. ADJUST to find

(CONTINUED)
NAEVIA

emerging from the shadows of the pantry, having narrowly escaped detection. She presses against the gate, her eyes desperately searching for

CRIXUS,

who appears from the shadows of the mess hall. He quickly steps up to the gate and kisses her passionately through the bars. Crixus grips the iron bars, hissing his frustration.

CRIXUS

The gods grant me strength to tear these bars from their fucking moorings.

NAEVIA

We were fools to think they would favor us.

CRIXUS

We yet share a roof. It would not be so had Dominus sold me to Vibius. Is that not some proof that our union is favored?

NAEVIA

To have you, but not have you. It is a wound beyond healing.

Crixus gently caresses her cheek.

CRIXUS

All wounds heal. Even the deepest.

She takes his hand, tears coursing down her face.

NAEVIA

Would that they had never been inflicted.

CRIXUS

You would wish never to have known my heart?

SOUNDS from the villa above draw her attention. She kisses him quickly without answering, hurries up the stairs. OFF CRIXUS, left uncertain by the exchange...
EXT. TRAINING SQUARE/BALCONY - BATIATUS’ LUDUS - DAY

SWORDS CLASH as the day’s training begins. Spartacus and Varro exchange blows. Varro pauses, catching sight of CRIXUS

as he strides out into the square, looking like he owns the fucking place. The other men pause to watch his triumphant return.

VARRO
The Undefeated Gaul returns.

Spartacus gives Crixus a dismissive glance.

SPARTACUS
Perhaps it is time he chose a new name.

ANGLE ON DOCTORE as he clasps arms with Crixus.

DOCTORE
My spirit soars to see you again upon the sands.

CRIXUS
(a vulpine grin)
The underworld would not have me.

Doctore turns to the men.

DOCTORE
Take note, you worthless fucks! A true champion rejoins the Brotherhood!

He tosses Spartacus a pointed look as half the men hustle over to welcome Crixus back. Agron spits in disgust, snorting to Duro.

AGRON
Champion of ass and balls.

ADJUST off Crixus and the men to

THE BALCONY

where Lucretia watches with an appreciative smile. Naevia hovers nearby.
Has there ever been such a man as Crixus?

No, Domina. There has not.

Her eyes fill with longing and regret, unnoticed by Lucretia as Batiatus joins them from the triclinium.

Praise the gods for his return.

May they see him to many victories.

And our purse filled by such.

Yes. Filled to bursting.

Lucretia smiles, but as she turns back to Crixus it is clear that her interest has nothing to do with monetary gain.

Crixus slides his arm into a practice shield and takes a wooden sword offered by Doctore. He grips it with deep satisfaction.

You will spar with Duro --

The German? He has yet to step in the arena.

And you have been long absent. Prove yourself with the man and see advancement.

And who shall face Ashur?

They turn to find Ashur striding up with a practice sword, leg brace removed but a slight limp still in evidence.

Choose carefully, for I long for blood.

Doctore glances at Ashur’s leg, locks eyes with a frown.

(CONTINUED)
You train?

I do.

By whose word?

The Dominus himself promised that I would rejoin the Brotherhood as soon as I was free of that fucking brace --

Ashur.

Ashur glances up to the balcony. Batiatus motions him up to the villa.

A word.

Batiatus disappears back inside. Ashur’s proud smile wilts. Crixus laughs.

The master calls his dog to his lap.

A knot of Gladiators laugh as Crixus moves to spar with Duro.

(Continued)

Consider yourself fortunate. The lowest among us would have ended you.

He takes the practice sword form Ashur, WIPING US TO --

Ashur follows Batiatus, pleading his case.

What of my victory over Hasdrubal? How the crowd roared when I clove his head in two?
CONTINUED:

BATIATUS
A minor triumph, long forgotten.

ASHUR
Kleitos, then! Or -- or Lysimachos --

BATIATUS
All many seasons ago. Your days as a gladiator are past.

ASHUR
Dominus, I beg you. Let me prove myself yet worthy.

Batius pauses.

BATIATUS
You already have. Outside the arena. Your cunning is far sharper than any gladiator’s sword. I would not risk it on errand of foolish pride. We are in agreement?

Despondent but resigned, Ashur nods.

ASHUR
Your will, Dominus.

BATIATUS
Let us turn to business, then.

(continues walking)

I have had thoughts toward Solonius. I would discuss them on way to market...

A downtrodden Ashur follows Batius into his office, their motion WIPING US TO --

INT. MASTER BATH - BATIATUS’ VILLA - DAY

A CASCADE of STEAMING MILK pours from an urn over Lucretia’s shoulders as she luxuriates in a MILK-BATH. Naevia washes her back with a sea-sponge.

LUCRETIA
Did you note any sign of discomfort as he took to the sand?

NAEVIA
No, Domina.
LUCRETIA
He is eager to regain his place. I would not see him overreach, nor hide pain from his recovery. If you notice Crixus attempting to conceal anything from me, tell me immediately.

Naevia averts her eyes, the dangerous irony of that not lost on her.

NAEVIA
Yes, Domina.

Mira enters with a fresh urn of hot milk. She pours it into the tub, nervously avoiding eye-contact with Lucretia.

LUCRETIA
The opposite sex has no sense when it comes to their limits. They must be constantly watched, least they harm themselves in the simple act of being men.

Mira turns to leave.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
Wait.

Mira turns back, her eyes downcast in respect -- and fear.

MIRA
Domina.

LUCRETIA
How did Spartacus fare last night? Was his cock of impressive size when engorged? How many times did he have you? Speak.

Mira shifts nervously.

MIRA
(soft) He would not have me.

Lucretia levels a withering gaze. A beat.

LUCRETIA
He would not?

MIRA
No, Domina.

(continues)
Mira complies, eyes never rising to meet Lucretia’s. Naevia subtly averts her own, not wishing to add to the girl’s embarrassment as Lucretia assesses her body.

Lucretia considers her for a long beat, returns her attention to her bath.

Lucretia waves her away. OFF Mira, fear constricting her face as she exits, WIPING US TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS’ LUDUS - DAY

The Gladiators spar and work various training stations. Crixus, intent on proving that he’s in full form, viciously presses Duro. Duro gets cracked, stumbles back, fighting to catch his breath.

DURO
This isn’t... the arena...

CRIXUS
The world is my arena, pup.

Crixus charges, his sword a blur. Duro struggling to deflect them, fails. Crixus sends him crashing to the sand, dazed and spitting blood. Crixus laughs, turning to Doctore.

(CONTINUED)
CRIXUS (cont'd)
Send me a man to fight, Doctore --

WHAM! Agron slams into Crixus, knocking him off his feet. The two men struggle, throwing punches.

DOCTORE
Stand down! Agron!

He grabs Agron by the hair, hurls him off Crixus. Duro rushes to help him. Crixus leaps to his feet. Doctore restrains him with a palm to his chest.

DOCTORE (cont'd)
Enough.

DOCTORE (cont'd)
(to Agron and Duro)
Half rations for the remainder of the week. Test my patience again and I will see you both to the mines!

Duro and Agron move off, glaring at Crixus as they pass Spartacus and Varro drinking from the rain barrel.

SPARTACUS
Crixus continues making friends.

Varro nods absently, lost in thought as he drinks.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
Yet no word from your wife?

VARRO
And none forthcoming. I have no more coin to pay Ashur for the service of letters.

Spartacus follows Varro’s gaze, sees Ashur at the ludus gate with Batiatus, preparing to leave.

SPARTACUS
You will dishonor us, if your mind is not on the games. Tell the jackal I will cover the cost.

VARRO
I will repay you.

SPARTACUS
Quickly. Before he departs.

(CONTINUED)
Varro hurries off to catch Ashur.

CRIXUS (O.S.)
Your man has taken afoot.

Spartacus turns to find Crixus coming up, practice sword and shield in hand.

CRIXUS
Perhaps you would care for a real opponent.

Spartacus considers him for a moment.

SPARTACUS
Are you so eager to return to the Medicus?

Crixus’ hand tightens round the handle of his sword. But before he can respond Hector the guard interrupts.

HECTOR
Crixus. You are summoned.

Crixus glares at Spartacus.

CRIXUS
Soon.

He turns and follows Hector, WIPING US TO --

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS’ VILLA - DAY

Crixus slams Lucretia, his eyes still smoldering from his exchange with Spartacus. She grips his hair, pulling him into an animal kiss as they climax together. Crixus slides off of her, preparing to go. Lucretia stops him.

LUCRETIA
Tarry a moment.

Crixus registers surprise at the unusual request.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
Dominus is yet at the marketplace.
And Ilithyia is not expected for several hours.

Crixus nods, settling back in next to her, unsure of what to make of this. She takes his hand, moves it gently across her stomach.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
Is my skin not soft?

CRIXUS
Yes, Domina.

LUCRETIA
I had the slaves draw a milk bath, recalling how much it pleased you when we could afford such things...

She begins tracing Crixus’ scars with her fingers.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
Do they yet cause you pain?

CRIXUS
No, Domina.

LUCRETIA
I wish I could say the same. It was agony to watch such perfection marred by Theokoles.... When you fell to your knees, the giant at your back... My heart seized in my chest, threatening to never beat again. And then you looked up to the pulvinus. To me. What was of your mind, in that frozen moment between life and death?

Crixus considers the question, the memory yet fresh.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ARENA/PULVINUS - CAPUA - DAY (FLASHBACK EP. 105)

[NOTE: ALREADY SHOT] Crixus falls to his knees, bloodied and defeated. THEOKOLES moves in behind him for the death blow. Crixus looks up to the pulvinus.

CRIXUS’ POV

scanning the crowd. PAUSE BRIEFLY ON Lucretia, gazing at us, distraught, then MOVE UP AND LAND ON NAEVIA.

BACK TO CRIXUS

as a faint smile bends his lips at the sight of her, the reason for his own heart to beat.
INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATICATUS’ VILLA - DAY

Crixus is still in the moment, speaking of the absent Naevia.

CRIXUS
That I welcomed the afterlife, having lived to know the love of a goddess.

Lucretia is deeply moved, believing the words meant for her.

LUcretia
Not even death could keep us from each other’s arms. You will always be mine, Crixus.

She nestles in close, her head on his chest.

LUcretia (cont’d)
And mine alone.

OFF CRIXUS, the proclamation giving him no comfort...

EXT. MARKET ALLEY - CAPUA - DAY

SOLONIUS negotiates with a GRAIN MERCHANT, examining open sacks of unmilled barley and wheat.

SOLONIUS
The drought recedes and yet your prices rise. My friend the Magistrate would surely frown upon such larceny...

ANGLE ON Batiatus and Ashur observing him from across the market. Batiatus’ eyes burn with the cold flame of revenge.

BATIATUS
You are clear to your purpose?

ASHUR
(morose)
Yes, Dominus.

Batiatus considers Ashur’s obvious mood.

BATIATUS
I know your desires were toward the arena. Do not let such disappointments cloud the matter at hand.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ASHUR
(indicating his hands)
They are yours to command, Dominus.

BATIATUS
Inform when the deed is done.

Batiatus exits through the crowd, away from Solonius. Ashur watches him go, his loyal eyes filling with resentment as he considers his options.

ON SOLONIUS

as he drops coins in the Merchant’s hand with a show of disgust.

SOLONIUS
Five sacks, for the price of ten.
And see to it they are dry this time, shit whore. The last ones stank of mold.

ASHUR
Do not churn, good Solonius.

Solonius turns to find Ashur approaching.

ASHUR (cont'd)
The thief will suffer when prices plummet with the next harvest.

SOLONIUS
I pray his cock follows the decline.
   (looks for Batiatus)
You are left off leash?

ASHUR
My master is for his villa. I yet have business to attend.
   (a whisper)
And words, searching for receptive ears.

Solonius gauges that, nods as he moves away from the Merchant.

ASHUR (cont'd)
My situation has shifted.

SOLONIUS
And with it, your loyalties?

(CONTINUED)
ASHUR
Batiatus proves himself unworthy, as you had divined.

SOLONIUS
Such base character seldom weighs the true worth of a man.

ASHUR
I trust your scales are more in balance. I hold valuable news. Beyond the meager recompense you offered when last we spoke.

SOLONIUS
(wonders aloud)
I am surrounded by jackals...

ASHUR
It concerns your life. If that is no cause to loosen your purse...

Ashur starts to turn away.

SOLONIUS
Wait.

Solonius withdraws his purse, slips Ashur a few coins. Ashur stares at him. Solonius sighs, hands him the entire purse.

SOLONIUS (cont'd)
You have picked my bones clean. Speak, before I reclaim the meat.

ASHUR
You fuck the whore Despoina on this night every week, do you not?

SOLONIUS
You voice what is already well known to me.

ASHUR
Send another cock in your place. Or see it removed along with your head.

SOLONIUS (tensing)
Batiatus moves against me?

(CONTINUED)
ASHUR
I am to pay his agent, and see the order given. You have been warned.

Ashur slips away into the crowd. OFF Solonius, darkening...

INT. BATIATUS’ VILLA - SUNSET

Lucretia walks with Ilithyia, who takes in the now opulent villa with appreciation.

ILITHYIA
I really cannot believe the difference. When I first entered your home, I felt great sorrow for the woman forced to live in such conditions. Now look at you. Surrounded by opulence rivaling families of proper heritage.

Lucretia smiles warmly through the veiled slight.

LUCRETIA
Trinkets, not nearly valued as much as your friendship.

ILITHYIA
You have many new friends of late. You and Licinia seem quite at ease with one another.

Lucretia tenses, wishing to avoid the subject.

LUCRETIA
Gratitude for the introduction. Would you care for some wine or --

Ilithyia sighs, flustered.

ILITHYIA
Wine will not still my thoughts. I prattle on with pleasantries, but I cannot pretend indifference to what you revealed about Licinia.

LUCRETIA
I revealed nothing. You leapt to conclusions.

ILITHYIA
And landed on proper footing. Ever since, I can think of nothing else.

(CONTINUED)
LUCRETIA
With respect, Licinia’s passions
are her own concern.

ILITHYIA
(laughs)
My mind falls not to Licinia. It
is filled with baser thoughts. A
vision of brutish hands being laid
upon me... in a manner quite
lacking in my husband’s touch.
(breaking from it)
I should not speak of such things.
I dishonor myself.

Lucretia considers this as a welcome surprise. The fly has
at last wandered into the web.

LUCRETIA
Your desires should not shame you.
You are a woman. And our needs are
vast.

ILITHYIA
I must put my mind from it.

LUCRETIA
To the purpose of distraction?

ILITHYIA
Preferred to discovery. Such a
thing would ruin my husband, and
taint my father’s name.

LUCRETIA
Such concerns have been voiced by
all those who have partaken of our
wares. Can you name any, save
Licinia?

ILITHYIA
I have heard of none.

LUCRETIA
No. You have not.

Lucretia smiles wryly, her point having been made. Ilithyia
beams at the thought of getting away with such a thing.

LUCRETIA (cont’d)
Shall I make arrangement?
Ilithyia teeters on the edge of impropriety, finally pitches over with a scandalous giggle.

ILITHYIA

Yes!

LUCRETIA

You will not be disappointed. May I suggest Varro? You seemed quite taken by the prowess he displayed the eve of the Vulcanalia.

ILITHYIA

Varro? Far too common. The man must equal the risk.

She locks eyes with Lucretia, a knowing smile creasing her lips.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)

A fact well known by your own desires. Ones that I admittedly share...

OFF LUCRETIA, realizing she has been maneuvered...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

AN ORNATE VASE SMASHES against a wall. WIDEN to reveal Lucretia destroying the bedroom in a full-on Citizen Kane rage. Naevia and other SLAVES scamper out of the way.

NAEVIA

Domina --

LUCRETIA

Out! Out of my fucking sight!

She sweeps her perfume and oils from her vanity, the vessels CRASHING to the floor. Naevia and the Slaves comply, passing Batiatus as he hurries in.

BATIATUS

My ears suggest a tempest, but eyes reveal a wife gone fucking mad!

LUCRETIA

Look to that bitch Ilithyia as the cause.

(CONTINUED)
Batiatus scowls, picking up the shattered pieces of the ornate vase.

BATIATUS
What new slights have prompted you to such costly eruption?

LUCRETIA
Her cunt overflows at the thought of Licinia bedding a gladiator. She desires equal treatment, and has set her lust upon Crixus!

Batiatus considers that for a moment.

BATIATUS
And her choice drove you to rage?

Lucretia realizes she’s slipped, quickly recovers.

LUCRETIA
It was not her choice, but her manner that offended. Honey drips from her tongue, concealing the bite of piss she showers upon us.

BATIATUS
The acrid taste is well familiar...

He strokes her hair, trying to calm her.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
... but we must swallow it, along with our pride until we have secured her husband’s patronage.

LUCRETIA
What use is Glaber when Licinia can give us Marcus Crassus?

BATIATUS
Crassus' wealth is undeniable, yet he holds but the rank of senator. Glaber outweighs with that of Legatus. The favor of both coin and title would speed our ambitions.

LUCRETIA
To rise you would have me kneel?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Batiatus

One day soon we will give Ilithyia a lesson in manners. But for now, necessity dictates we give her Crixus. Make the arrangements.

OFF Lucretia, realizing she has no other choice...

INT. BATH - BATIATUS’ LUDUS - NIGHT

Crixus stands like a bronze god as a slave scrappes the grime off his chiseled flesh.

Duro (O.S.)

Fucking Gaul...

REVERSE TO FIND AGRON AND DURO, scraping the dirt off themselves as they glare at Crixus from across the bath.

Agron

Turn your thoughts. I will have at him soon enough.

Duro moves off for more oil. Agron scrappes, his eyes attempting to incinerate Crixus from a distance.

Spartacus

You wish your brother dead?

Agron turns to find Spartacus behind him, slaves scrapping him.

Agron

Who speaks such a thing?

Spartacus

Your actions.

Agron

I only look to protect him.

Spartacus

And who will do so in the arena, where every man must stand alone? You do him no favors.

Varro’s angry voice pulls Spartacus’ attention to the entrance of the bath.

Varro (O.S.)

You lie!

(CONTINUED)
Varro slams Ashur against the wall by his throat, eyes wild, intent on further violence.

SPARTACUS
Varro.

Spartacus approaches. Varro hisses to Ashur.

VARRO
Tell him you lie!

ASHUR
(to Spartacus)
I did only what you paid me to do. I sought out his wife, but she was not there.

SPARTACUS
The boy?

ASHUR
I saw no one. But there was blood, spilled upon the floor --

Varro screams, slugging Ashur. Ashur fights back, sending them both careening into the other men. Shouts erupt.

SPARTACUS
Varro! Gain your senses!

Spartacus tries to separate them. Varro screams in rage, his eyes wild. Doctore rushes in.

DOCTORE
Guards! GUARDS!

Chaos reigns as GUARDS rush in, WIPING US TO --

OMITTED

INT. HOLDING CELL - BATIATUS’ LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON HANDS being secured in shackles. POP WIDE to reveal Varro struggling as Guards chain him to the wall. They finish, exit. Varro rails and thrashes, desperately attempting to free himself.

SPARTACUS
They will not break.
Spartacus appears from the shadows on the other side of the holding cell bars.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
I have tried.

Varro gives his chains a last violent yank, grunts in frustration.

VARRO
Speak to Batiatus.

SPARTACUS
Towards what purpose?

VARRO
You have his ear. If he would let me leave these walls for but a day or two --

SPARTACUS
He would not allow it.

VARRO
You will not even make attempt?

SPARTACUS
You are fortunate only to be chained. To petition Dominus with such insanity would only provoke further punishment. How would this help your cause?

Varro slumps in defeat.

VARRO
My cause is lost.

SPARTACUS
Ashur saw only blood. No bodies. Which means your wife and child may yet be living.

VARRO
The gods punish me, for failing them.

SPARTACUS
The gods rarely take note of fools. Now pull head from ass and use it for once! Where would your wife and boy flee, if set upon? Think.
OFF VARRO as he gropes for the answer -- and the frail sliver of hope...

INT. MESS HALL/PANTRY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

GUARDS pass by on their rounds. Crixus disengages from the shadows, quickly moves to the pantry gate -- and tenses to find Naevia absent on the other side. His eyes scan the darkness, futilely searching for her.

CRIXUS
(soft)
Naevia?

No reply. He turns from the bars, troubled by her absence.

DOCTORE
The hour is late.

Doctore appears from the ludus.

DOCTORE (cont'd)
You should be in your cell.

CRIXUS
(coversing)
I could not sleep. My mind burns with hope and desire... for the arena.

DOCTORE
Embrace the sands of time. As they flow, I harbor no doubt you will again be a champion.

CRIXUS
(bitter)
Capua already has its champion.

DOCTORE
Spartacus bears but the title. I look towards a man of honor to reclaim it.

Crixus registers surprise at that. OFF his smile, realizing he has an unexpected ally in his quest to regain his position...
INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATHIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus sleeps. PAN to the door as it slowly creaks open. A SHADOW slips in, cautiously creeping toward Spartacus, bending close. WHAM! Spartacus snaps awake, instantly grabbing the intruder by the throat. He freezes, realizing it’s Mira.

SPARTACUS
If you value your life... never awaken a gladiator.

MIRA
Please... Domina sent me...

Spartacus releases her.

SPARTACUS
Return the way you came.

MIRA
Why do you refuse me? Am I not pleasing...

She lets her gown fall to the floor, revealing her naked perfection. Spartacus never takes his eyes from hers.

SPARTACUS
I have no desire to lie with a woman who has been commanded to do so.

MIRA
And what do you think will happen if I fail such a command?

Spartacus hears the fear in her words, frowns.

SPARTACUS
Stay then.

She smiles, taking a step towards his bed.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
On the floor.

He tosses her a ratty blanket.

MIRA
Is there nothing I can do for the Champion of Capua...?

Spartacus considers her, a thought forming.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS
There is one desire I would have serviced. If you are able...

OFF Mira, her sultry smile broadening at the prospect...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE/BALCONY - BATIATUS’ LUDUS - MORNING

Spartacus annihilates RHASKOS in the morning’s training. Crixus glances over, dissecting the Champion’s moves for future reference as he again spars with Duro.

THE BALCONY

Batiatus grins to Lucretia.

BATIATUS
Spartacus breathes fire this morning.

Mira appears, setting breakfast on a table. Lucretia eyes her with a knowing smile.

LUCRETIA
I wonder to the cause. Mira. How did your evening pass with our champion?

MIRA
He made... many demands of me.

BATIATUS
(laughs, impressed)
Many demands!

Batiatus slaps Mira on the ass as she exits.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
So our Thracian is ready to stud.

LUCRETIA
I will make arrangements for this very night.

BATIATUS
And when the sun rises, we will have road to Marcus Crassus.

(kissing her)
What of Ilithyia, and her desire for Crixus?

(CONTINUED)
I have already set plans to motion.

Lucretia gazes down at Crixus training in the morning sun, her emotions well concealed.

TRAINING SQUARE

Crixus fends off Duro, who is intent on making up for his earlier defeat. Crixus laughs, enjoying the challenge.

CRIXUS
 Finally, the pup bares his teeth.

Agron glances over from his own sparring, grins at his brother’s performance.

VARRO

is hauled out into the square by Hector and another GUARD and unceremoniously dumped to the sand. Doctore frowns at him.

DOCTORE
 Perhaps next time thought will precede tongue. Pair with Spartacus.

Varro wearily complies. Spartacus eyes his friend’s ragged condition.

SPARTACUS
 (quietly)
 Sleep did not come?

VARRO
 Nor is it deserved.

SPARTACUS
 Embrace dreams when the sun falls. I have news.

VARRO
 (brightening)
 Aurelia...?

SPARTACUS
 Not yet. But I have dispatched Mira, one of the house slaves, to look for her. And your son.

The encouraging words rally Varro.
VARRO
How do you manage such a thing?

SPARTACUS
Mira was sent by Domina. To prepare me for... certain duties required of a champion.

VARRO
(laughs)
So the gods throw women at you, now!

As they clash swords, MOVE ACROSS THE MEN to Crixus, expertly deflecting Duro’s assault -- until his attention flickers to NAEVIA in the pantry, talking with Hector. He unlocks the gate from the mess hall and joins her inside. As he shuts the gate behind him, she LAUGHS shyly, lightly touching his arm.

CRIXUS FILLS WITH RAGE,
Duro taking the unfortunate brunt of it. Crixus attacks, brutally dismantling the young gladiator.

AGRON
instinctively moves to protect his brother, but then stops short. He locks eyes with Spartacus, remembering his words from earlier, thinks better of it.

CRIXUS
spins, landing a VICIOUS CRACK TO DURO’S JAW, lifting him off his feet, BLOOD SPRAYING. He CRASHES TO THE HARD SAND. Doctore nods, pleased with the move.

DOCTORE
Your form returns. Pair with Hamilcar.

Crixus, chest heaving, moves to comply. His eyes fall to the pantry as he goes, his heart dropping as he finds Naevia and Hector now gone.

DURO
spits blood as he painfully rises, looking to his brother for support. Agron turns away, continues sparring. Varro catches the silent exchange.
CONTINUED:

VARRO
It appears Duro has lost his brother.

SPARTACUS
Better that than his head.

Spartacus slams into Varro, SMASHING US TO --

INT. OFFICE - BATIATUS’ VILLA - DAY

A BLOODY SACK THUNKS onto the table. WIDEN TO REVEAL AULUS (the henchman that killed Sura in Ep. 106) having placed it there, Ashur by his side. Batiatus eyes the sack.

BATIATUS
It is done?

ASHUR
The whore Despoina fucks no more.

AULUS
Nor the man inside her when I slit her throat.

Batiatus shifts his eyes to Ashur, questioning.

ASHUR
It was not Solonius.

Batiatus considers that, opens the sack. He peers in, examining the head inside (which we do not see).

BATIATUS
Whose face do I look upon?

ASHUR
Kastor. One of Solonius’ men.

Batiatus considers the head, his face unreadable. He closes the sack and tosses it back to Aulus.

BATIATUS
Send it to Solonius. Let him savor the relief of escaping death. For the moment.

OFF BATIATUS, already planning his next move...

OMITTED
Hector and another Guard escort Spartacus to the atrium where Lucretia awaits with Naevia. Lucretia waves the Guards off.

**LUCRETIA**
You will be bedding a proper Roman woman. Far beyond your station. Heed me well, that you not offend her.

**SPARTACUS**
Yes, Domina.

Lucretia moves through the villa. Spartacus follows, with Naevia in tow.

**LUCRETIA**
Speak not a word, nor make a sound, save one of pleasure. Follow her lead and anticipate her desires -- then fulfill them. Vigorously.

**SPARTACUS**
Yes, Domina.

**LUCRETIA**
In the arena, you are the Champion of Capua. But tonight, you are nothing more than a common slave. To do as commanded. Are we clear?

She stops at a dimly lit chamber where Mira and several other SLAVE GIRLS wait to prepare Spartacus.

**SPARTACUS**
We are clear, Domina.

Lucretia scrutinizes him for even the slightest sign of resentment or willfulness. Finds none.

**LUCRETIA**
(re: Mira and Girls)
They will prepare you for the festivities. Wait until summoned.

Spartacus gives her a head-bow and enters the chamber. Mira and the Slave Girls remove his subligaria. Lucretia takes a deep breath, steeling herself for what’s to come.
CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
(to Naevia)
Bring our best wine. I wish to see my guest well plied when she arrives.

Naevia bows, exits. OFF Lucretia, the importance of the evening -- and something deeper -- weighing heavy...

INT. PANTRY - BATIATUS’ VILLA - NIGHT

Naevia descends the stairs. She moves to the wine jugs, searching for the right one. A silent beat, broken by --

CRIXUS
Where were you?

She whirls, startled to see Crixus standing in the shadows outside the gate.

CRIXUS (cont'd)
Last night. I waited to the point of discovery.

NAEVIA
(going to him)
I could not break away. I was tending to Domina.

CRIXUS
Domina...? Or the guard I saw you with today.

Naevia half laughs, waving that away.

NAEVIA
You are mistaken --

CRIXUS
I am not blind. You laugh and touch his arm. The way he gazes at you...

NAEVIA
If you are not blind, then you surely see that Hector gazes at all women in the same fashion.

CRIXUS
I give no shit to other women. You shame me.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She eyes him, her eyes burning that he could think such a thing.

NAEVIA
You shame yourself, with thoughts of imaginary slights.

CRIXUS
I know what I saw.

NAEVIA
No. You do not. Nor did Hector...

She withdraws the GATE KEY from her robe, dangling from a length of cord. Crixus stares at it in shock.

CRIXUS
You stole his key?!

NAEVIA
The purpose of my smile and my touch. The only one he received.

She opens the gate.

NAEVIA (cont'd)
I have but a moment before I must return with Domina’s wine. Use it to apologize for ever thinking --

Crixus is on her as soon as the gate is open, pulling her into a desperate kiss.

CRIXUS
You are my heart... I shall never doubt the beating of it again...

She kisses him hungrily, forgiving him. OFF their passion...

INT. CHAMBER - BATICUS’ VILLA - NIGHT

QUICK RAMPED POPS as Mira and the Slave Girls rub Spartacus with a mixture of GOLD FLAKES, gilding every inch of his chiseled body. Mira peers up at him with deep longing and tenderness -- clearly this girl is developing feelings for Spartacus. The two lock eyes for just a moment, and then Spartacus looks away.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

A GOLDEN MASK OF APOLLO

is handed to Mira. SPARTACUS’ POV as Mira places the mask over his face, WIPING US TO --

INT. TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS’ VILLA - NIGHT

GUARDS stand at the periphery, blindfolded, as Spartacus steps into a BROAD SHAFT OF MOONLIGHT. MASKED AND COVERED IN GOLD, he looks every bit the naked, Roman god.

LICINIA

reclines on a nearby sofa, a cup of wine in her hand. She wears nothing except the WHITE PORCELAIN MASK OF DIANA and a loose wrap of diaphanous silk. Her mouth parts in astonishment as she takes in this figure of masculine perfection wrought in living gold.

LICINIA/DIANA RISES,

a goddess in her own right. The cup falls from her hand, forgotten as she joins Spartacus in the moonlight. Her hand trembles in sexual expectation as it touches his chest. An electric beat. She removes her hand, gazing at the gold dust now coating her palm. She looks up at Spartacus.

LICINIA/DIANA

(a whisper)

Take me.

Spartacus hesitates for a fraction of a second, then does as commanded. His hands find her flesh, possessing it as he eases her to the floor and enters her. She gasps in pleasure and pain, loving them both.

SERIES OF DISSOLVES

as Spartacus performs his duties as befitting a champion. She shudders and groans, crying out in rapture, losing herself deep in the animal passion of the illicit moment as she rides Spartacus like a caged beast, finally freed. Spartacus flips her on her back, mounts her. Long, deep, powerful thrusts, her legs wrapped tightly around his waist, hands clawing at his back.

LICINIA/DIANA (cont’d)

Fuck me, you filthy animal. Fuck me --

OTHER DIANA (O.S.)

What is this?

(CONTINUED)
They whip around to find Lucretia standing with ANOTHER DIANA, dressed and masked exactly the same.

LUCRETIA
Apologies, Licinia. It seems we’ve arrived before Ilithyia has finished with Spartacus.

Ilithyia (Licinia/Diana) stiffens, whirling to rip the mask off of Spartacus. She stares up at him in frozen horror.

ILITHYIA
No...

A slight smile of revenge bends Lucretia’s lips. Instead of giving Ilithyia Crixus, Lucretia has maneuvered her into fucking the man she hates.

SPARTACUS
Ilithyia...?

Rage flashes across Spartacus’ face as he realizes that he just fucked the wife of the man that sent his own into slavery. In a flash his hands are at her throat.

LUCRETIA
(stunned)
Guards! Guards!

The Guards rip off their blindfolds, tearing Spartacus away from Ilithyia. He struggles like a madman, enraged.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
Remove him! Now!

The Guards haul the struggling Spartacus out of the room. Ilithyia choke, gasping for air behind her mask. A tense beat -- broken by the Other Diana, aka the real Licinia, laughing as she removes her mask.

LICINIA
Oh, would this not set every tongue in Rome to wagging.

ILITHYIA
Stop laughing...

LICINIA
The wife of Legatus Claudius Glaber!

Ilithyia rises, pulling the mask from her face. Eyes wild and streaked with tears.

(CONTINUED)
ILITHYIA
Stop...

LICINIA
Fucking Spartacus, the man who nearly ruined him!

LUcretia
It is a scandal, is it not?

LICINIA
The most splendid I have ever heard.

ILITHYIA
STOP LAUGHING!

Ilithyia loses it. She smashes Licinia in the face with her mask. The mask shatters, sending Licinia crashing to the floor. Ilithyia pounces on her, repeatedly slamming her head into the floor.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
Stop laughing! Stop laughing!

LUcretia
Ilithyia!

Lucretia pulls Ilithyia back, but it's too late. The back of Licinia's skull is crushed. Bits of brain stain the floor. She gurgles blood, spasms, lays still, eyes open.

A BLOOD SPLATTERED ILITHYIA

collapses into Lucretia's arms, sobbing. Lucretia stands frozen, realizing her little game has gone horribly awry. CAMERA PULLS OUT into an OVERHEAD SHOT: Lucretia cradling a tearful Ilithyia; Licinia, dead on the floor, her head haloed by a SLOWLY EXPANDING POOL OF BLOOD.

INT. BEDCHAMBER/PERISTYLE - Batiatus’ VILLA - NIGHT

Shell-shocked, Ilithyia sits in the DEEP background on the edge of the bed, rocking mindlessly back and forth. RACK TO FOREGROUND as Batiatus rails at Lucretia in the peristyle.

Batiatus
(harsh whisper)
What were you thinking?

(CONTINUED)
She slights me at every turn. I only wished to teach her a lesson.

By pairing her with Spartacus?!

If my husband will not defend my honor, I am forced to do so myself.

Honor? Is that why the cousin to Marcus Crassus lays dead in our fucking house?!

That was not my intent.

Your intent matters for nothing. Fuck! We are undone!

No. Liciinia came alone. She told no one of her purpose.

Batiatus freezes, wheels turning.

No one?

Not even her slaves. There is nothing to connect her with the House of Batiatus... Once her body is disposed of.

What of Ilithyia?

Leave her to me.

OFF LUCRETIA, darkening as she turns to Ilithyia in the bedroom...

INT. BATH - BATTIATUS’ LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus absently scrapes the gold flecks from his skin, lost in thought.
CONTINUED:

Batiatus (O.S.)

Apologies.

Spartacus looks up to find Batiatus entering, a Guard stationed at the mouth of the bath.

Batiatus

It was an unfortunate mistake, coupling you with Glaber’s wife. Know that it was not my intent, nor of my knowledge.

Spartacus

It is I who owes apology. For a moment my hands were not my own, but those of a man who no longer exists.

Batiatus takes this in, nods.

Batiatus

Let us not speak of this night again.

He moves to exit, pauses in the doorway.

Batiatus (cont’d)

Spartacus. Your loyalty. It honors this ludus.

Batiatus exits. OFF SPARTACUS, his body partially covered in gold, neither man nor god...

INT. BEDCHAMBER - Batiatus’ LUDUS - NIGHT

Lucretia cradles Ilithyia in her arms, soothing the traumatized woman.

Ilithyia

I did not mean...

Lucretia

Of course you didn’t.

Ilithyia

The way she laughed at me.... You said I was to lie with Crixus. Why did you give Spartacus? Why would you do such a thing?

Lucretia pins her with a hard look. The gloves are off.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA
You ask what you already know
answer to.

Ilithyia crumbles.

ILITHYIA
My husband will see me dead for
this... You have killed me...

LUCRETIA
No. I have brought us closer. No
one will ever know what happened
this night. And Licinia's body will
not be found. You are protected.

ILITHYIA
They will know. They will all see
the deed in my eyes.

LUCRETIA
Then you will stay here. With me.
Until your eyes are clear.

Ilithyia stares, trying to comprehend that through the
tears.

ILITHYIA
You would do such a thing? For me?

LUCRETIA
We have had our differences,
however veiled. But I have come to
realize what a valuable friend you
are.

She kisses Ilithyia on the mouth, a lingering, Judas-kiss.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
And this will be our little secret.

Lucretia smiles, using Ilithyia’s earlier words against her.
Ilithyia registers the sickening threat they carry, which
only serves to deepen Lucretia’s smile...

BLACKOUT.

END OF EPISODE