

THE ANCIENT GRIDIRON

By

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EXT. VILLAGE CAMP, MACEDONIA - DUSK

SUPERIMPOSITION:

ROMAN PROVINCE OF MACEDONIA

65 B.C.

The snow falls heavily as villagers settle in for the night. Women prepare food, while the men put their hunting tools away and join their families.

Through the heavy snow fall, a silhouette comes into view. A little BOY (6) swinging a wooden sword, fighting an imaginary battle.

BOY
DIE, ROMAN DOGS!

As he fends off the imaginary warriors, SHADOWS of real men appear in the snow. The BOY stops. VILLAGERS in the area take notice, grab their children and rush inside as the BOY slowly glances up, dropping his wooden sword at the sight of..

50 ROMAN SOLDIERS on HORSEBACK coming into view, stopping inches away from the BOY. Leading the formation are two bright-eyed Lieutenants..

OCTIVIUS (Late 20's, elegant in stature) and JULIUS (Early 30's, the allure of a true leader).

Julius dismounts his horse and struts over to the BOY.

JULIUS
That's not a very nice thing to say
about Rome, boy.

He picks up wooden sword and hands it back.

JULIUS
Now, run along.

The BOY quickly rushes away. Octivius dismounts his horse and walks over to Julius. 20 ROMAN SOLDIERS dismount their horses as well, grabbing their swords, and gathering behind Octivius and Julius. In their view, a LOG CABIN.

GENERAL (O.S.)
Remember, we are not to kill him. He is
to be escorted back to Rome alive and
well.

Julius rolls his eyes. Octivius takes notice.

OCTIVIUS

Do you not agree, Julius?

JULIUS

I have my discrepancies.

Julius gives a devious smile as he turns to the CABIN..

JULIUS

WE KNOW YOU ARE IN THERE, THEONIDAS!
YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED BACK TO ROME AND
WE ARE HERE TO BRING YOU BACK!

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

THEONIDAS (30's, great physique), face barely seen through the dark grooves of his GOLD SPARTAN HELMET, as he puts it on.

His body is tattered in scars. Highly noticeable is the large "X" etched on the right side his ribcage, which is visible as he grabs the legendary weapon..

THE SPARTAN SWORD, an imposing piece of metal with same "X" symbol etched on the base of its blade.

He turns to a WOMAN (20's) holding a CHILD (2). There's extreme fear in her eyes.

THEONIDAS

Hand him to me, my love. I must do this now.

The WOMAN hands the CHILD to Theonidas, who uses the SPARTAN SWORD to etch an "X" on the right side of CHILD'S ribcage..

THEONIDAS

Now the Gods will forever know... that you, my son, are a Spartan Warrior.

Theonidas hands him back to the WOMAN. She quickly tends to the wound with a cloth.

THEONIDAS

No matter what happens out there, I need you to stay in here with him. Do you understand?

She nods, tears roll down her face.

Theonidas takes a deep breath and turns to door, clinching the SPARTAN SWORD... HE'S READY!

EXT. VILLAGE- CONTINUOUS

Julius, Octivius and 20 ROMAN SOLDIERS approach the CABIN. The "what now?" look is on their faces as they stare nervously at the door.

BOOM! - Theonidas smashes through it. He quickly lowers his shoulder and plows into Julius and Octivius, sending them to the ground.

The SPARTAN SWORD goes to work as Theonidas slashes through the 20 ROMAN SOLDIERS with ease.

YARDS AWAY - The GENERAL, still on horseback, watches in awe as another ROMAN OFFICER rides up.

ROMAN OFFICER
What do we do now, sir?

GENERAL
See what he does next, I guess.

Theonidas tosses the bloody SPARTAN SWORD down, sticking it into the ground, picks up another sword and throws it..

WHAP! - Striking the GENERAL through the helmet.

The remaining ROMAN SOLDIERS on horseback watch in shock as their general falls off his horse, dead.

Theonidas pumps his chest to them..

THEONIDAS
TEN, TWENTY, THIRTY! IT DOES NOT MATTER
HOW MANY YOU ROMAN DOGS HAVE. I WILL
FIGHT TO THE END!

Julius suddenly emerges behind him, holding the SPARTAN SWORD, ready to strike.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
NO!

As Julius crashes down, the WOMAN jumps in the way..

SLASH! - Theonidas quickly turns to the dismay of seeing the mother of his child fall dead to the ground. Julius gives him no time to grieve as he lunges forward, stabbing Theonidas with his own weapon.

Theonidas lets out a faint grunt and falls to his knees. Julius takes the SPARTAN SWORD out, waving it in the air.

JULIUS

The last of Spartan Warriors, slain by
the Great Roman Soldier, Julius... Thanks
for making me a legend.

Preparing for the final blow...

OCTIVIUS (O.S.)

WAIT!

Julius pauses...

OCTIVIUS

We are not to kill him. It was a direct
order from the Senate.

Julius slowly turns his head to Octivius, a rivaling look in his
eyes.

JULIUS

Damn the Senate.

SWOOP! - Theonidas' body slumps to the ground. His DETACHED head
follows. His GOLD HELMET rolls off in the process.

Julius grabs Theonidas' head and holds it up, presenting it to
the remaining ROMAN SOLDIERS.

JULIUS

YOU WILL ALL REMEMBER THIS DAY! YOU
WILL GO BACK TO ROME AND TELL YOUR
FELLOW CITIZENS THAT IT WAS I, GAIUS
JULIUS, WHO DEFEATED THE LAST KNOWN
SPARTAN WARRIOR, THEONIDAS!

The ROMAN SOLDIERS applaud the achievement as Octivius turns
away, highly disgusted by the spectacle.

A CHILD IS HEARD CRYING - Octivius quickly looks over, seeing a
crying BOY, the same one holding the wooden sword.

Julius takes notice as well. He drops Theonidas' head and walks
over to the BOY.

JULIUS

Why are you crying, boy?

BOY

You... You killed my Mother...You killed my
Father...

Julius quickly snatches wooden sword from the BOY, and hands him
the bloody SPARTAN SWORD.

JULIUS

Do you know what glory is, boy?

Julius kneels down, positions blade of SPARTAN SWORD to his own throat as it trembles in the BOY'S hands.

JULIUS

You can strike me down now and never
know the glory your father once had, or
you can grow up and live that glory...
Glory that will make average men praise
you like a God.

The BOY contemplates for a moment, tears streaming down his face. He lowers SPARTAN SWORD in submission, staring at the "X" on base of its blade.

A BABY IS HEARD CRYING - Alarmed, Julius quickly turns to CABIN.

JULIUS

Another child?

SLASH!!! - The blade of the SPARTAN SWORD grazes across Julius' cheek, as he slumps to the ground.

The BOY drops SPARTAN SWORD and quickly runs off. Julius covers gash on his face, turning to Octivius...

JULIUS

What are you waiting for you idiot?
KILL HIM!

Octivius and 6 other SOLDIERS run after the BOY, disappearing in the FOG...

EXT. THICK FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

The BOY desperately runs, stumbling through the snow, occasionally looking back at the silhouettes of the ROMAN SOLDIERS chasing him.

He approaches the base of a large ridge and stops, it's a dead end. He takes a deep breath and slowly turns as Octivius and the 6 SOLDIERS come into view. They stop a couple yards away from the BOY.

SOLDIER #1

End of the line, boy!

The SOLDIERS draw their swords as the BOY stands terrified.

OCTIVIUS

Wait!

The SOLDIERS look over at Octivius, who doesn't have his weapon drawn.

OCTIVIUS

We are not going to kill this boy.

SOLDIER #1

Are you mad, sir? Julius is second in command and he ordered us to kill him.

OCTIVIUS

What if he doesn't know? We could say that we couldn't find him.

The SOLDIERS are surprised by this open display of defiance, and start to get riled up...

SOLDIER #2

This is blasphemy!

SOLDIER #3

Kill the boy!

SOLDIER #1 steps up to Octivius...

SOLDIER #1

Even though you are our superior officer in this matter, I will still see to it that Julius hears of this insubordination to his order.

OCTIVIUS

You speak of as if Julius speaks for all of Rome.

SOLDIER #1

And you, sir, speak with a bold but foolish tongue.

SOLDIER #1 turns, raises his SWORD and charges, as the BOY closes his eyes, bracing for the final blow.

SLASH! - The BOY slowly opens his eyes - NOTHING HAPPENED - He looks down and notices BLOOD droplets on the snow. He quickly glances forward, seeing SOLDIER #1 on the ground, in 2 pieces, cut at the torso.

Standing next to the severed body is another ROMAN SOLDIER, holding 2 bloody HATCHETS, but this one is not from the pursuing group.

This ROGUE SOLDIER looks massive in comparison to the average ROMAN SOLDIER, an intimidating force of nature.

A gruesome slaughter ensues as the ROGUE SOLDIER attacks the remaining ROMAN SOLDIERS...

Octivus quickly sneaks behind a tree and watches as one by one the 5 remaining SOLDIERS are brutally cut down like mince meat.

The BLOOD BATH ends and the ROGUE SOLDIER takes a moment to appreciate his artwork of scattered body parts and blood in the snow. He then takes a deep breath and turns to the BOY.

ROGUE SOLDIER

Dry your eyes, you have to be a warrior now.

The BOY tries to compose himself, wiping his tears away.

ROGUE SOLDIER

What is your name, boy?

BOY

Don... Donidas.

The ROGUE SOLDIER kneels down to Donidas.

ROGUE SOLDIER

Within that name, you must believe that you can make it a great one. Making a name outlast your own life is the task of legends.

OCTIVIUS (O.S.)

Barco?

The ROGUE SOLDIER stands and looks, as Octivus slowly emerges from behind the tree.

OCTIVIUS

You are one of Rome's most trusted soldiers, what is the reason for turning against your own?

ROGUE SOLDIER

I'm a Roman Soldier by debt, I'm a Gladiator for life...

The ROGUE SOLDIER takes off his ROMAN HELMET revealing that he is indeed... BARCO (Mid 20's), a man who has been through worst places then hell itself.

Barco clinches his hatchets and steps forward, as Donidas stands scared behind him.

BARCO

I am obligated to protect this boy.

OCTIVIUS

And I was ordered to kill him, but I too have my discrepancies...

Octavius places his sword in its holster, poising no threat.

OCTIVIUS

What if I told you that you are now part of a great plan? Would you believe me?

BARCO

I am listening...

OCTIVIUS

I will report that I killed the boy and left his body to the wolves. And I will report that you, the great gladiator, Barco, sadly died in the attempt to capture Theonidas.

Octavius takes a deep breath, glances over at little Donidas then back at Barco.

OCTIVIUS

But this is what I need from you...

EXT. VILLAGE CAMP, MACEDONIA - DAY

Everything is ransacked and pillaged. Dead bodies of VILLAGERS are seen everywhere. Some VILLAGE CABINS are still on fire.

Little Donidas stares at remains of his FAMILY CABIN, which is burnt to a crisp.

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)

Take the boy back to the village. Surly Julius had it burnt to the ground...

The dead remains of his Mother and decapitated Father are well in view, as Donidas slumps his head in despair.

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)

Let him feel the burn inside his heart...

Barco puts his hand on Donidas' shoulder, as they turn away from the mayhem and walk away... disappearing through the SMOKE.

EXT. RIDGE, MACEDONIA - YEARS LATER - DAY

Barco and Doindas (8) are admiring the view which overlooks the beautiful COUNTRYSIDE...

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)
Settle far away from Roman authority...

EXT. OPEN FIELD, MACEDONIA - YEARS LATER - DAY

Barco practices SWORD FIGHTING with Donidas (10). The young Donidas displays great technique and skill.

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)
Train and mentor the boy to the best of your ability...

EXT. FOREST, MACEDONIA - YEARS LATER - DAY

A DEER is peacefully eating off the ground. Suddenly, Donidas (15) rushes in and stabs the DEER in the throat.

EXT. CAMP, MACEDONIA - DUSK

Barco waits as Donidas drags the DEER CARCASS up to him. Barco nods in approval.

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)
Raise the boy as your own...

EXT. OPEN TRAIL, MACEDONIA - YEARS LATER - DAY

Exhausted from training, Barco and Donidas (early 20's, lean and muscular) walk side by side, holding their swords.

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)
And when the time comes...

Suddenly, 15 ROMAN SOLDIERS on HORSEBACK surround them. Barco simply drops his sword and surrenders. Confused, Donidas quickly follows suit, and drops his sword as well.

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)
I will send for you both...

Mounted on his horse, a bright-eyed Roman Officer, Marcellus (Late 20's) watches in the distance, as Donidas and Barco get led away by the ROMAN SOLDIERS.

EXT. MINE PIT, OUTSKIRTS OF ROME - YEAR LATER - DAY

Barco and Donidas (mid 20's) are with other SLAVES, shackled and chained, excavating large ROCKS. A water bucket is presented to Donidas. He looks up and meets the African slave holding the bucket, Lucius (mid 20's).

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)

Through the pain and the agony, I beg
you to stay patient...

In the distance, Marcellus appears with 4 ROMAN GUARDS. He points out Donidas, Barco, and a couple other fit SLAVES including Lucius.

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)

Because there will be the day where you
will restore your glory. And the
burning in that boy's heart will be
ready to fulfill his destiny...

-The 4 GUARDS escort Donidas, Barco, Lucius and 40 other SLAVES out of the QUARRY and load them into 2 WAGONS.

OCTIVIUS (V.O.)

And it will all be for the good of
Rome...

FADE TO WHITE:

EXT. PEASANT VILLAGE - DAY

2 HORSE DRAWN WAGONS carrying TEAM OCTIVIUS ride towards a GATED CAMP, as VILLAGERS gather around, curiously watching.

JUSTIN (O.S.)

MOTHER LOOK!

JUSTIN (6) runs through the CROWD, trying to get closer look at the tired MEN in the WAGONS. His mother, MARCIA (Mid- 20's, very attractive) grabs him.

MARCIA

You must be careful, Justin. You could
be crushed.

JUSTIN

Are they soldiers? Like father was?

MARCIA

I... I don't think so, dear.

Marcia looks as 2nd WAGON passes and catches glimpse of Donidas, riding uncomfortably between 2 TEAMMATES...

FROM WAGON - Donidas slowly lifts his head and notices Marcia staring at him... He smiles... She smiles back...

The 2 WAGONS enter GATED CAMP. ROMAN GUARDS close the large WOODEN GATE DOORS behind them.

EXT. GATED CAMP - CONTINUOUS

This is a massive GLADIATOR TRAINING AREA with FIELDS, FIGHTING PITS, and CABINS spread around the CAMP.

The 2 WAGONS stop and GUARDS hustle the SLAVES out, leading them to the CENTER AREA. Their attention is directed to Marcellus, who is standing prominently on a platform.

MARCELLUS

I welcome you all. I am Marcellus,
officer in the honorable Roman Army and
overseer of what you see here.

(Beat)

Camp Octivius!

The SLAVES look around, a mixture of confusion and eagerness.

MARCELLUS (CONT'D)

You have been selected to take part in
a glorious Gladiator game. A game where
not only the strongest individual will
survive, but the strongest team. Get to
know one another well, men. You are
brothers now.

Marcellus turns to a MAN next to him...

MARCELLUS

This is Crixus. He will be your
instructor...

CRIXUS (mid 50's) steps up, scars riddle his body, an eye patch covers his right eye. He holds up a Rugby Shaped BROWN BALL, made of animal skin.

CRIXUS

This will be your instrument for victory. The team we represent will mean nothing if we cannot move this ball across the Arena dirt. The armor on your bodies will mean nothing if we cannot stop the other team from moving this ball to the other end. We will be at war, men, and my job is to prepare you for that war.

As Crixus looks over the group, he spots Barco and immediately stops.

CRIXUS

(To himself)

It can't be...

Crixus jumps off the platform and limps over.

BARCO

The time has been long, but I assure you, you are not staring at a ghost.

CRIXUS

Word traveled back that you had fallen to the Spartan Sword in Macedonia...

BARCO

Words travel faster than the man it seems.

CRIXUS

I could have never foreseen this day, where I get to watch you perform in the arena again. You were truly one of the greatest.

BARCO

It's a different game, Crixus. And this time...

He directs Crixus' attention to Donidas, standing beside him.

BARCO

It's not about me.

EXT. MAINSTREET, ROME - EVENING

The streets are alive with the average day hustle and bustle, as STREET VENDORS yell out their bargains to passing CITIZENS.

Octavius, on horseback, rides through the crowded streets. He stops his horse and looks around, admiring all the beautiful BUILDINGS that grace Rome and its people, and takes a long embracing deep breath...

INT. BALL ROOM, CAESAR'S PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

CAESAR (formally JULIUS) sits on a THRONE overlooking a party where POLITICIANS and MILITARY LEADERS socialize around a large buffet table.

We notice a large SCAR from a cut, on CAESAR'S left cheek as he turns to his assistant BRUTUS (Late 30's).

CAESAR

Look at them, Brutus. Idiots. All of them. Why do I even bother to entertain them with such luxury?

BRUTUS

Well, isn't it part of your duty to appease them, sir?

CAESAR

Only because they haven't given me full control of Rome, yet.

(Beat)

Speaking of appease... Where is Titicus?

BRUTUS

Your guess is as good as mine, sir.

CAESAR

Well go and find him. He should be here.

Suddenly, Caesar diverts his attention across the room, where he sees Octavius entering the party.

CAESAR (CONT'D)

And while you are doing that, I am going to go say hello to an old friend.

ACROSS ROOM - Octavius catches a glimpse of a beautiful WOMAN, who is conversing with another person and walks over to her. He lightly touches her hand as she turns...

CLAUDIA

(Shocked)

OCTIVIUS!

This prominent beauty CLAUDIA (Mid 30's). She would've started the Trojan War if this was the same story.

OCTIVIUS

I looked to the Gods while I was away,
begging for the day where I would see
your beauty again.

CLAUDIA

I thought... I thought...

OCTIVIUS

I know it has been a long time, but I
have kept my promise, Claudia. I have
returned.

Claudia stares at him for a moment, trying to find the words to
say, meanwhile their eyes retell the story of their past... a good
past.

OCTIVIUS (CONT'D)

Please say something, my dear.

Claudia looks away.

CLAUDIA

I... I thought you were dead.

OCTIVIUS

What would make you believe something
like that?

CAESAR (O.S.)

Claudia...

The mood quickly fades away, as Octivius glances over Claudia's
shoulder, seeing Caesar a couple feet away.

CLAUDIA

I am so sorry, Octivius.

Octivius watches in disbelief as Claudia goes over to Caesar,
gives him a kiss, and walks away. Caesar gloats to himself while
he struts over...

CAESAR

General Octivius, good to see you are
still among the living.

OCTIVIUS

It appears that you had another agenda
in my absences.

CAESAR

You were sent off to Egypt for the good of Rome. Claudia and I... Well, that's a different story.

(Beat)

How long has it been?

OCTIVIUS

Seven years.

CAESAR

That's quite some time, unlike our short stay in Macedonia of course... And tell me, old friend, what are your endeavors now that you are back?

OCTIVIUS

My former apprentice, Marcellus has been in charge of my estate in my absence and has purchased a gladiator team on my behalf.

CAESAR

Owning a gladiator team should be a good fit for you.

OCTIVIUS

They are actually scheduled to battle on the opening day.

CAESAR

And what about politics, any interest?

OCTIVIUS

That time will come. For now, all I want to do is settle back into society

Brutus suddenly appears behind Caesar and leans close to his ear.

BRUTUS

He's in his room, sir.

CAESAR

(To Octavius)

Will you excuse me, old friend?

INT. BEDROOM, CAESAR'S PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

TITICUS (Early 20's, Lean and Ripped) in bed, cuddled between 6 NAKED WOMEN. He's obviously a lady's man.

Caesar storms into the room and stops at the edge of the bed. A disappointing look on his face.

CAESAR

Why are you not at the party?

Titicus opens his eyes slightly and glances over at Caesar, uninterested, he closes his eyes again.

TITICUS

I am busy.

CAESAR

Must I remind you that you are a public figure? You are the face of the Roman Army Team and it is important that you make such events.

Titicus looks at the WOMEN around him, then back at Caesar.

TITICUS

You forget, Father. I am not just a public figure, I'm an icon, and as you can see, I have done my public service.

CAESAR

I don't know what is worst. Dealing with those apes in Senate or dealing with my own son.

Titicus is completely unmoved...

TITICUS

Could you please close the door gently on your way out? I don't want to disturb these sleeping beauties from their slumber.

CAESAR

(Flustered)

Very well then.

Caesar SLAMS the door on his way out. The 6 WOMEN jump awake.

Titicus shrugs his shoulders, placing his hands behind his head, and simply closes his eyes.

EXT. FIELD, GATED CAMP - DAY

The thirty SLAVES of TEAM OCTIVIUS gather around Crixus, who is standing at the center of the field, ball in his hands.

CRIXUS

This glorious game was designed to mimic war, so the field of battle is a vicious one. The objective is simple, attacking your opponent's territory by driving this ball to their CAPITAL, in return, preventing this ball from reaching ours. Sadly, as in battle, some of you won't make it out alive.

Crixus takes a moment, scans his team of SLAVES, studying the look in their eager eyes...

CRIXUS

Seven GLADIATORS from each team are allowed on the field of battle. Only three are designated to score with the ball, the CENTURION, the BRUTE, and the RUNNER. Each will have a symbol on their helmets distinguishing their position. The other four gladiators are called the SOLDIERS, their functions are to protect the ball carrier at all times or retrieve the ball back from the enemy.

He counts out seven SLAVES, Donidas, Barco, Lucius included, and directs them to one end of the field..

CRIXUS

You seven, line up!

The seven SLAVES jog to the end of the field and line-up as Crixus faces the rest of the SLAVES.

CRIXUS

The most important part of battle is called the CHARGE.

He puts the ball on the ground and looks over at the seven SLAVES, who are lined up, waiting patiently.

CRIXUS

Now who's the fastest?

Lucius hesitates, but steps up.

LUCIUS

I'm fast, sir.

CRIXUS

Good, then you are the RUNNER, get in the middle.

Lucius almost regrets saying anything as he slides to the middle of group.

CRIXUS
Your job is to get to ball as fast as
you can, then toss it to Donidas.

Lucius raises his hand...

CRIXUS
Yes.

LUCIUS
Is it a must that I have to toss it?

CRIXUS
I've never seen anyone run all the way
from a CHARGE, so yes, you should toss
it.

Donidas slowly raises his hand...

CRIXUS
Yes, Donidas?

DONIDAS
Then what do I do, sir?

CRIXUS
I'm getting to that...

MOMENTS LATER:

The ball is set at the center of the field. Crixus stands next to it with his hand up.

END OF THE FIELD - Lucius is set to run a couple meters in front of Donidas, Barco, and the four other SLAVES selected by Crixus.

OPPOSITE END - Another SLAVE prepares to run a couple meters in front of another group of SLAVES.

Crixus throws his hand down...

THE CHARGE IS ON! - Lucius and the opposing RUNNER race to the ball. Lucius gets there first and quickly tosses the ball backwards to Donidas.

CRIXUS (V.O.)
You are the CENTURION, Donidas...

Donidas stares at the ball in his hands, then looks forward, seeing the other group of SLAVES charging right at him.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

And once you have the ball, you have
the power...

Four SLAVES from Donidas' group CLASH with SLAVES from the
charging group...

CRIXUS (V.O.)

Your SOLDIERS will do their best to
protect you from the enemy, but you
have choose...

Donidas tucks the ball and takes off running. Some of the
charging SLAVES break free in hot pursuit.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

You can toss it back to your BRUTE, who
will be shadowing closely behind you...

He looks back at Barco, who waves him on to keep running.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

Or you can throw it forward to your
RUNNER...

He looks forward and sees a wide open Lucius, running up-field.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

The choice is yours. We need that ball
at the enemies CAPITAL.

Donidas is about to throw the ball...

BOOM! - He's suddenly hit by an opposing SLAVE and crashes to
the ground, ball still in his hands.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

But if you get taken to the ground,
toss it away fast...

SLAVES of the opposing group bombard Donidas, kicking and
punching him, trying to rip the ball away.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

Because they will come at you like a
pack of wolves...

The ball pops out of Donidas' hands, a SLAVE from the opposing
group scoops the ball up and begins running...

CRIXUS (V.O.)

Once the ball is lost, we must act fast
on DEFENSE and keep the enemy away from
our CAPITAL...

The opposing SLAVE is about to get tackled, but quickly passes the ball backwards to his TEAMMATE...

CRIXUS (V.O.)

If a SOLDIER recovers the ball, they may move forward, but they can only toss the ball backwards, never forward...

The SLAVE with the ball avoids a tackle from Luicus and tosses it backwards to another member... The opposing SLAVE with a head-wrap around his head, designating him the CENTURION of the group.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

The only Gladiator who can pass the ball forward on the field of battle is the CENTURION...

Donidas gets up and spots the opposing RUNNER, who is wide open up-field.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

That's why the RUNNER must stay in front of the SOLDIERS during the attack...

Donidas rushes over, trying to shadow the RUNNER as the opposing CENTURION loads up for the throw...

BOOM! - The opposing CENTURION is suddenly blasted by Barco. The ball flies out...

CRIXUS (V.O.)

The action doesn't stop until the ball reaches one CAPITAL or the other...

Barco quickly scoops the ball up, breaks a couple tackles and runs all the way to the end of the field.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

Each team must reach their enemies CAPITAL four times in order to become victorious...

Barco spikes the ball to the ground and holds up his fist in triumph.

CRIXUS (V.O.)

It's war, Men... And that's why Rome loves it.

EXT. GATED CAMP - EVENING

The SLAVES of TEAM OCTIVIUS relax within the limits of the CAMP, nursing their bruises and wounds from the training session.

Donidas walks along the GATE. He stops and peaks through a narrow gap between two wooden planks. He looks out to the PEASANT VILLAGE in the distance, admiring this peaceful, untainted world.

EXT: PEASANT VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Marcia is carrying a water pail as Justin follows. Justin curiously looks over at GATED CAMP and notices Donidas peaking from behind the planks...

JUSTIN

Look Mother, there's one of them.

Marcia turns to reply, but it's too late, Justin's already dashing towards GATED CAMP...

MARCIA

JUSTIN!

She drops water pail and chases after him...

MARCIA

COMEBACK HERE, JUSTIN!

IN FRONT OF THE GATE - Justin stops, looking up at Donidas between the planks.

JUSTIN

Hello.

Donidas kneels down, eye level to Justin...

DONIDAS

Hello, Justin.

JUSTIN

(Surprised)

How... How do you know my name?

DONIDAS

Magic...

MARCIA (O.S.)

How many times have I told you not to run off like that, Justin?

Donidas looks over at Marcia as she rushes up behind Justin, stands to greet her.

DONIDAS (CONT'D)
Hello to you as well. I am Donidas.

MARCIA
Marcia...

JUSTIN
Why are you in there?

DONIDAS
I am training to be a Gladiator.

JUSTIN
When I'm a man, I want to be a
Gladiator as well.

Marcia nudges Justin...

MARCIA
No you don't! It is a gruesome sport,
not to be glorified.

Justin, slumps his head down, dreams crushed.

MARCIA (CONT'D)
Come Justin. Let's not bother this man.

She takes Justin's hand and walks away. Donidas watches them go,
and lets out a "sigh" as they disappear out of view.

EXT. GATED CAMP - NIGHT

Donidas sits next to Lucius on a bench, staring at a fire pit,
as other SLAVES around the area, preparing to pack it in for the
night.

DONIDAS
I met a woman from the village.

LUCIUS
And you spoke to her?

DONIDAS
(Blushing)
Yes, but I do not think any good came
from it.

LUCIUS
Why is that?

Donidas looks up at the sky, taking a deep breath.

DONIDAS

To her, we are only animals in a cage.
To impress her, I would have to move
mountains, but I am only a slave.

He stares back at Lucius...

DONIDAS (CONT'D)

What if being a Gladiator is not as
glorifying as we are to believe?

LUCIUS

Well, what do you believe?

DONIDAS

I believe that once I avenge my
father's death, only then, will I be
glorified.

BARCO (O.S.)

But to do that you have to move
mountains...

They turn to Barco, who is holding the ball in his hands.

BARCO

And we got some training to do... Are you
ready, Donidas?

Donidas nods his head "yes."

MONTAGE BEGINS:

EXT. TRAINING AREA, GATED CAMP - MULTIPLE MORNINGS

The thirty SLAVES of TEAM OCTIVIUS are going through multiple
training segments... RUNNING, PUSH UPS, GRAPPLING... They are all
exhausted, sweating like crazy, but show heart as they grind on.

EXT. FIELD, GATED CAMP - MULTIPLE DAYS

PRACTICING OFFENSE - Donidas tosses the ball to Barco, who
tosses it to Lucius, who tosses it back to Donidas as they run
up and down the field. A couple other athletic SLAVES practice
the same thing behind them with a different ball.

ANOTHER SECTION - The larger SLAVES are lined up against each
other - A HORN SOUNDS OFF - And the big boys CLASH, practicing
blocking.

PRACTICING DEFENSE - Donidas and Lucius are excelling at the
tackling drills, but it is Barco proving to be the bruiser as he
dishes out big hits to whoever gets the ball.

Marcellus and Crixus are overlooking the process, highly please.

EXT. GATED CAMP - MULTIPLE EVENINGS

Donidas sits by a FIRE PIT, along with Barco, Lucius and other SLAVES... They eat... They socialize... They relax.

INT. CABIN - MULTIPLE NIGHTS

The SLAVES are sleeping, packed in tight. Donidas is lying between Lucius and Barco. Barco snores like a chainsaw, keeping Donidas awake, who just stares up at the ceiling, fixated on a star he can see through a crack.

MONTAGE ENDS:

EXT. GATED CAMP - DAY

CRIXUS
GATHER AROUND, MEN!

The thirty SLAVES of TEAM OCTIVIUS gather around the platform, staring up at Crixus and Marcellus.

Marcellus steps up, presenting a BLACK SASH with GOLD TRIMMING. He adjusts the SASH, showing an EMBLEM of a LION'S HEAD stitched on it.

MARCELLUS
The LION...! This is what you will be representing on the field of battle, an animal with tremendous pride.

Marcellus scans over the SLAVES, reading their eyes, seeing most agree with the name.

MARCELLUS
With that being said, we will leave camp this evening and will arrive in Rome shortly before dawn. Get some sleep while we travel, it's important you are fit for the battle... That is all!

As the LIONS OF OCTIVIUS disperse, we see Donidas standing in a daze, the pressure mounting in his eyes... He's uneasy.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COLISEUM, ROME - DAY

FULL SCALE - of the Luxurious COLISEUM is seen with all its glory as ROMAN CITIZENS celebrate around it.

FRONT ENTRANCE - CROWD gathers around 2 STREET PERFORMERS, swinging wooden swords, staging a fake gladiator fight, retelling the stories of past legends.

STREET PERFORMER #1 takes an exaggerated hit, and falls dramatically to his knees. STREET PERFORMER #2 stands over him, pointing wooden sword..

STREET PERFORMER #1
(Overacting)
Do what you must. I am at your mercy.

STREET PERFORMER #2 drops his wooden sword and holds out his hand.

STREET PERFORMER #2
(Overacting)
This is not mercy. This is respect. The greatest power two legendary gladiators can share... IN GLORY!

STREET PERFORMER #1 takes his hand and stands. The CROWD loves it and applauds the performance.

INT. GLADIATOR DUNGEON, COLISEUM - DAY

The ENERGY is intense, as the thirty LIONS OF OCTIVIUS gear up, transforming themselves into the GLADIATORS we know and love from the history books.

DONIDAS sits on a bench, equipping himself with body armor, covering the "X" on right side of his ribcage. The LION SASH around his waist.

He takes a couple deep breaths and waits, legs jittering uncontrollably. The HELMET that shakes in his lap has a STAR engraved on the crown, the symbol of the CENTURION.

Donidas looks over at Barco, dressed in full gladiator gear, a HATCHET symbol on his HELMET, he's The BRUTE.

Barco is going through his prefight ritual, standing with his arms spread out, eyes closed, growling like a dog. He takes a moment, opens his eyes, and glances over at a nervous Donidas.

BARCO
Are you ready, Donidas?

Donidas gives him an unsure nod.

EXT. STADIUM TERRACE, COLISEUM - DAY

ROMAN CITIZENS, full of anticipation, pile into the area..

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

POLITICIANS and MILITARY LEADERS take their seats.

Octavius and Marcellus sit down and settle in as well. Octavius takes a couple of nervous breaths..

MARCELLUS

You mustn't worry, Sir. Donidas looked good during training. Barco and Crixus have trained him well.

OCTIVIUS

I don't need him to be good, Marcellus. I need him to be great.

They both look forward at the FRONT SECTION where they see..

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION - CONTINUOUS

Caesar in his prominent seat, sitting between Claudia and Brutus.

CAESAR

Another fine day for battle, wouldn't you say, Brutus.

BRUTUS

Indeed, Sir.

Caesar leans over to Claudia, who seems uninterested.

CAESAR

And you, my dear?

CLAUDIA

(Sarcastic)
Delighted, darling. As always

Caesar smiles in response as he leans back in his seat, looking down at the..

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

-100 METERS OF DIRT, RIDDLED WITH SPIKE PITS, FIRE POTS, BOILING TAR TUBS AND LARGE JAGGED ROCKS.

-THE OBSTACLES ARE EVENLY DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN THE TWO 50 METER TERRITORIES, SEPERATED BY THE CENTERLINE.

-A LION IS CHAINED ON ONE SIDE OF THE FIELD, A TIGER ON THE OTHER.

-AT EACH END OF THE FIELD ARE THE CAPITALS (SCORING AREA), MARKED OFF BY A PATCH OF GRASS AND A LINE.

-THERE ARE FOUR LARGE CHALICES IN THE SCORING AREAS, FOUR BRONZE CHALICES ON ONE END, FOUR SILVER CHALICES ON THE OTHER.

-FULLY ARMED GUARDS SECURE THE SIDELINES.

The CROWD NOISE dissipates as the ANNOUNCER walks out to the CENTERLINE of the FIELD.

He holds up the rugby shaped, BATTLE BALL...

ANNOUNCER

The stage is set for battle and the rules are very clear. The first Gladiator Team to cover all four chalices wins the battle. Sadly but surely great men will die here today... BUT IN THE NAME OF GLORY!

He points to Caesar's position...

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Let us not forget, the great man who created this epic game, the owner of the Roman Army Team, and the leader of the Republic... JULIUS CAESAR!

CHEERS echo through the COLISEUM, as Caesar stands and waves to the CROWD.

INT. TUNNEL, COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

The NOISE from outside continues, as TEAM OCTIVIUS, wearing their LION SASHES around their waists, marches towards the exit.

Donidas is in front of the group, anxious.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The CROWD goes crazy as two rival GLADIATOR TEAMS rush out from opposite tunnels of the ARENA. The thirty members on the other

GLADIATOR TEAM are wearing GREEN SASHES with COBRA EMBLEMS around their waists.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

MARCELLUS

They are called the Cobras of Cornelius.

Marcellus points, directing Octavius' attention to GENERAL CORNELIUS (40's), sitting a couple rows away, conversing and joking with his military entourage.

OCTIVIUS

Ah yes, General Cornelius. I remember him. He was the one sent to Germania with five Roman legions?

MARCELLUS

He returned with quite the reputation. It is said that the men on his team were his fiercest enemies in battle.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The two GLADIATOR TEAMS occupy the SIDELINES as the ANNOUNCER sets the ball on the CENTERLINE.

He looks up at the CROWD.

ANNOUNCER

LET THE BATTLE BEGIN!

The CROWD GOES WILD, as Donidas and six other TEAMMATES, including Barco and Lucius nervously march onto the obstacle riddled FIELD. The other twenty-three TEAMMATES remain on the SIDELINES, cheering them on, some relieved not the first ones out there.

Donidas notices the CHAINED LION, staring directly at him, licking its lips.

LUCIUS (O.S.)

I think he likes you.

Donidas turns to a smiling Lucius, walking next to him, a LIGHTNING BOLT etched on his HELMET, indicting he's the RUNNER.

DONIDAS

If given the chance, I think he would like you too, my friend.

Lucius' smile disappears as he, Dondias, and the other TEAMMATES huddle around Barco at the end of the FIELD, marked off by a long line... This is the SCORING AREA.

BARCO

I have been in battle many times before and this is no different. I want to win, I want the glory, and I want my freedom back. Remember, be fierce, watch out for traps, and stay clear of those damn animals... ARE YOU READY!

TEAM

(Chanting)
WE ARE READY!

The seven GLADIATORS disperse. Lucius steps up to the small line drawn in the dirt, about a meter away from the SCORING AREA where Donidas, Barco and the other four TEAMMATES set up.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octivius leans forward, eager...

OCTIVIUS

I pray the plan can be set in motion after today.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Lucius takes a deep breath and sets in a running stance. The opposing RUNNER, lightning bolt on his helmet as well, sets up on the opposite end.

THE HORNS SOUNDS OFF - Lucius takes off in a sprint, Donidas, Barco and the four other TEAMMATES charge behind him...

The opposing RUNNER and his six TEAMMATES take off as well...

ALL RACING FOR THE BALL ON THE CENTERLINE.

Lucius gets there first and quickly tosses the ball back before getting decked by the opposing RUNNER.

Donidas catches it and scans the opposition as his four SOLDIERS set up in front of him - BOOM! - Instantly clashing with the opposing GLADIATORS... Fresh blood is spilled.

Barco stays a couple meters behind Donidas...

BARCO

GO DONIDAS!

Donidas tuck the ball in and runs...

An opposing GLADIATOR breaks from a block and spearheads towards Donidas, who panics and quickly throws the ball forward as he gets PLOWED into the dirt.

Lucius jumps up and catches the ball - BOOM! - The opposing CENTURION, star on his helmet, smashes into him.

The ball flies out of Lucius' hands as he slides in the dirt, stopping inches away from a SPIKE PIT. He stares down at the spikes, sighs in relief.

The opposing CENTURION picks the ball up and runs pass the CENTERLINE, into Team Octivius' territory...

As a GLADIATOR from TEAM OCTIVIUS approaches, the CENTURION quickly throws the ball forward to one his SOLDIERS.

The SOLDIER runs a couple meters before tossing the ball backwards to another SOLDIER, who quickly tosses it to another... trying to play keep away, setting up a strategy on offense of course...

CRACK! - Barco lays a devastating hit to the opposing GLADIATOR with the ball, sending him flying into a BOILING TAR TUB... The CROWD gasps.

The ball falls to the ground. Donidas rushes over and scoops it up and avoids getting tackled as he runs into the opposing team's territory...

Donidas sees a clear path to the score as he rounds a SPIKE PIKE, passes a FIRE POT, and runs right onto the nice patch of GRASS where four BRONZE CHALICES sit... The CROWD goes wild.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octivius applauds the feat. Marcellus joins in...

MARCELLUS

There's more to come I assure you.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Donidas grips the ball to his chest as he stares up at the CROWD, mesmerized by their excitement...

A MAN SCREAMS! - Donidas quickly shakes out his daze and turns to...

The opposing GLADIATOR who was thrown into the BOILING TAR TUB, now squirming on the ground, skin melting off of his tar covered body. The sick reality of this glorious game.

Two GUARDS rush over with swords. They look up towards the TERRACE, where Caesar stands, holding his thumb in the neutral position.

Caesar puts his thumb in the down position, the GUARDS quickly put the injured GLADIATOR out of his misery, and drag the dead body away.

Donidas completely ignores this brutally as he stares up at Caesar.

BARCO (O.S.)

You will have your day soon, Donidas.

DONIDAS

The scar on that man's face...

BARCO

The man who murdered your father.

DONIDAS

Then I could have my day now. A sword.
A spear. I could hit him from here.

BARCO

And be known as nothing more, than a
dirty slave assassin.

He pats Donidas on the back...

BARCO

Now put the ball in the first chalice
and stay focused. We have three more to
go for the victory.

Donidas complies and slowly walks over to the first BRONZE CHALICE in the row of four. He places the ball in it and the CROWD goes wild with cheers.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octavius looks over at Marcellus and smiles...

OCTIVIUS

I can get use to this.

MARCELLUS

Now you can see why the people of Rome
love the battles at the coliseum.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

A backup GLADIATOR for the COBRAS OF CORNELIUS comes off the SIDELINE and joins his TEAMMATES at the end of the FIELD.

ON THE OPPOSITE END - Donidas, Lucius and the other four TEAMMATES huddle around Barco.

BARCO

(To Donidas)

Your throw was rushed. You must be patient.

Donidas nods in compliance, as Barco looks at everyone.

BARCO

Three more chalices to fill for the victory... READY!

TEAM

(Chanting)

WE ARE READY!

All seven GLADIATORS disperse and line up on the SCORING AREA line as Lucius once again steps up to the small line.

He takes a calm deep breath as he looks forward at the opposing RUNNER on the other side... They give each other a rivaling look.

THE HORNS SOUNDS OFF - They both take off, sprinting for the ball... Lucius wins once again, tossing the ball back to Donidas.

Donidas runs, but is immediately tackled as opposing GLADIATORS swarm him, kicking and punching, until the ball is stripped away from his grip.

The opposing CENTURION scoops the ball up and tosses it back to his BRUTE, who trucks his way passed the CENTERLINE, into the other territory.

Barco swoops in and decks the BRUTE, smashing him into a JAGGED ROCK. The ball falls to the ground.

One of the SOLDIERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS picks it up, runs a couple meters, and quickly tosses it backwards to Donidas, before getting rocked to the ground.

Donidas looks up field as the opposing GLADIATORS rocket towards him. He spots Lucius running freely in the opposing team's territory, towards the SCORING AREA...

Donidas loads up and launches the ball in the air...

Lucius sees the ball flying and tries to stay under it. The opposing CENTURION shadows Lucius and trips him. They both crash into the dirt. The ball hits the ground to and bounces onto the patch of GRASS..

Lucius kicks the CENTURION off, pops up and dives on the ball for the SCORE... The CROWD goes wild!

Lucius glides hand over the blades of grass, smiles and gets up to place the ball in the second BRONZE CHALICE.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octivius leans back in his seat, satisfied.

OCTIVIUS

They have heart, that's for sure.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Lucius jogs over to Donidas as they head back into their territory, back to their patch of GRASS.

LUCIUS

I can get use to this.

DONIDAS

I as well, my friend

They look up at the CROWD, so alive, so energetic.

DONIDAS

Let's keep this going. Soon they will remember all of our names.

Lucius nods his head and smiles.

MONTAGE BEGINS:

Lucius wins the CHARGE and tosses the ball backwards to Donidas. Donidas breaks a tackle and tosses the ball to another TEAMMATE, who immediately gets hit and falls into a SPIKE PIT. Blood spatters up. Donidas turns away, grieving..

A GUARD with a net fishes the ball out of the SPIKE PIT and tosses it up in the air. THE GAME COMMENCES..

Lucius hits an opposing GLADIATOR, running with the ball. As they hit the ground, a "Growl" is heard. Lucius quickly jumps out of the way, as the chained TIGER pounces on the opposing GLADIATOR and mauls him to death..

As the ball rolls on the ground an opposing GLADIATOR picks it up, runs into the SCORING AREA, and places it in the first SILVER CHALICE.

Lucius losses the CHARGE. The opposing GLADIATOR TEAM sets up their strategy, tossing the ball back in forth. Donidas misses a tackle, allowing the opposing BRUTE to run in for the SCORE, placing ball in the second SILVER CHALICE.

Lucius is exhausted as he sets for the CHARGE. The HORNS SOUND OFF and he sprints for the ball. The opposing RUNNER reaches it first and tosses it back to his CENTURION, who trucks pass Lucius and continues running..

Donidas takes an angle of pursuit, but misses the tackle allowing the opposing CENTURION to run all the way into the SCORING AREA. The opposing CENTURION puts the ball into the third SILVER CHALICE.

Two GUARDS with swords run up to an injured GLADIATOR, who has a dislocated KNEE. Caesar gives the "thumbs down." The GUARDS quickly kill the injured GLADIATOR.

Donidas dodges two opposing GLADIATER and throws the ball to a wide open Lucius, who catches it for the SCORE. Lucius places the ball in the third BRONZE CHALICE.

THE BATTLE IS TIED AT THREE TO THREE..

MONTAGE ENDS:

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar leans forward in his seat, focusing on Barco, who is chasing after an opposing GLADIATOR on the ARENA FLOOR..

CAESAR

Is that Barco? I thought he was killed years ago?

BRUTUS

He was found outside one of our territories in Macedonia and circulated back into slavery. I'm surprised you haven't heard of this, sir.

CAESAR

Interesting.. I must have overlooked it.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The opposing CENTURION has the ball...

Donidas sheds passed the opposing BRUTE and lays a BIG HIT on the CENTURION. The CENTURION crashes to the ground. The GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS quickly pounce on him, kicking and punching. The ball pops out, Barco falls on it but is immediately swarmed by the opposing GLADIATOR TEAM - IT'S CHAOS!

GLADIATOR BRUTE (O.S.)
FIGHT CHALLENGE!

HORNS SOUND OFF - EVERYONE freezes, the CROWD goes silent.

Donidas stands up, full of confidence, but his chest quickly deflates as he turns, seeing the ANNOUNCER rush over to the fuming GLADIATOR BRUTE.

ANNOUNCER
Are you sure you want to issue a Fight
Challenge?

BRUTE
Yes!
(Points to a Donidas)
With him.

The ANNOUNCER looks up at the CROWD, smiling heavily.

ANNOUNCER
WE HAVE A FIGHT CHALLENGE!

CROWD goes crazy...

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octivius turns to Marcellus, curious...

OCTIVIUS
Enlighten me?

MARCELLUS
A FIGHT CHALLENGE is a fight to the
death or at Caesar's mercy...

OCTIVIUS
Just like the old days?

MARCELLUS
Yes sir, but only one fight challenge
may be issued per team...

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The CROWD continues to erupt, as Crixus waves Donidas over to the SIDELINES.

CRIXUS

You need a weapon, Donidas.

Donidas glances across the FIELD, seeing the BRUTE select a trident spear and a sword. Barco walks over and hands Donidas a sword.

BARCO

Remember your training and strike when the opportunity presents itself..

Barco senses his nervousness..

BARCO (CONT'D)

Be strong now, Donidas.

Donidas grips sword tightly and walks to the CENTERLINE, as Barco and Crixus look on.

CRIXUS

If he is anything like Theonidas, then this should be an easy match for him.

BARCO

But he's not... not yet.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octavius and Marcellus are at the edge of their seats.

MARCELLUS

That is a big advisory, would you say, sir.

OCTIVIUS

Indeed..

MARCELLUS

But, I predict Donidas will prevail with ease.

OCTIVIUS

I certainly hope so, Marcellus.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The BRUTE charges, swinging the trident and sword wildly. Donidas deflects the trident and ducks the sword as it swings over his head.

He sees an opening and uppercuts the BRUTE below the chin, where the helmet doesn't protect. The trident falls.

The BRUTE quickly regains composure and grabs Donidas' by the throat, lifting him... CHOKING him...

The CROWD gasps as Donidas dangles for moment. He swings his sword and hits the BRUTE in the arm... Donidas drops and quickly rolls to his feet.

Adrenaline surges through Donidas' veins as he goes on the attack...

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octavius and Marcellus lean forward, impressed.

OCTIVIUS
So far, so good.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The BRUTE defends with his sword, but grows weary as he desperately tries to block the vicious strikes.

Donidas confidently backs up, catches a quick breath, and attacks again - BOOM! - The BRUTE delivers a BIG BOOT to his BODY ARMOR...

Donidas crashes into the dirt, back first...

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octavius slumps his head down...

OCTIVIUS
Damn!

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Donidas is out of breath as the BRUTE stands over him, pointing the sword to his throat.

BRUTE
You are now at Caesar's mercy.

Donidas nervously looks up towards TERRACE, where Caesar holds his thumb in the neutral position, playing to the CROWD, who are screaming with mixed feelings about Donidas' fate.

Caesar smiles, looks down at the BRUTE and gives the "thumbs up." The CROWD applauds this decision, as the BRUTE stares down at Donidas.

BRUTE

A few could only hope to be as lucky.

The BRUTE picks up his trident and struts back to his TEAM'S SIDELINE as Barco walks over and helps Donidas up.

BARCO

A slight change in that thumb's position and years upon years of preparation would have been for nothing. Now, regain your strength, we need to assure this victory.

Donidas nods in compliance, but is exhausted as he tries to compose himself.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar sits back down in his prominent seat, gloating to himself.

CAESAR

You know, Brutus. Sometimes to get the people on your side, you must show mercy from time to time.

BRUTUS

Well said, sir.

CAESAR

Besides, I'm curious to see how long this Gladiator survives this season. He seems quite bold.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

THE CHARGE IS ON - Lucius reaches the ball first and tosses it back to Donidas, who barley catches it being so tired.

He takes a deep breath and begins running up-field with the ball. In his peripherals, he spots 2 opposing GLADIATORS, closing in on him.

Donidas boldly leaps into the air, bounces off LARGE ROCK, and jumps clear over the opposing GLADIATORS - SUDDENLY - One of the GLADIATORS catches his foot - SLAM! - And plows Donidas into the dirt.

The ball comes loose. The opposing RUNNER picks it up, and runs all the way onto Team Octavius' patch of GRASS, pumping his chest in triumph as he places the ball in the fourth and final SILVER CHALICE.

Donidas, bloody and gasping for air, watches from the ground as the opposing GLADIATOR TEAM celebrates their victory, the crowd cheers the victory as well.

The GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS hold their heads down, defeated.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octavius leans back in his seat, disappointed..

OCTIVIUS

We have a lot of work to do, Marcellus.

MARCELLUS

I agree, sir. I will see to it that they are in high spirits for the next battle.

OCTIVIUS

Good, in the meantime..

He glances over at the POLITICIAN SECTION, where he spots an old ally, SENATOR TRAVIAN (mid 50's), who is conversing amongst his peers.

OCTIVIUS

I will try my best to get reacquainted with my fellow Romans.

EXT. SENATE BUILDING - DAY

The SENATE BUILDING stands prominently, with beautiful Roman style pillars supporting its powerful structure.

ZOOM IN - closer into the entrance, we hear a room full of MEN, YELLING and ARGUING..

INT. ROMAN COUNCIL ASSEMBLY, SENATE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Caesar, annoyed, sits in his high seat overlooking the "LOUD" SENATE MEETING in session. Several MILITARY OFFICERS are in attendance as well.

SENATE MEMBER #1
 ...And that is why we should not expand
 Rome's borders any farther.

SENATE MEMBER #2
 I concur. We should stop while we are
 ahead.

SENATE MEMBER #3
 No! We are strong, we should expand
 further.

The ROOM bursts into a LOUD FRENZY again, as the SENATORS try to
 voice their opinions.

CAESAR (O.S.)
 ORDER! ORDER!

The SENATORS don't hear this command and continue bickering...

CAESAR
 WILL YOU ALL JUST SHUT UP!

This approach works as the SENATORS stop. Caesar takes a deep
 breath and stands.

CAESAR
 I do not know why most of you oppose my
 view of expanding Rome farther into
 Africa and Asia. For it was I, Julius
 Caesar who defended Rome in its darkest
 hour. I am the true leader of Rome, and
 the people know it.

He looks over at Octavius, who is sitting amongst the MILITARY
 OFFICERS.

CAESAR
 General Octavius, how do you feel on
 this matter?

Octavius, caught off guard, takes a deep breath and stands to
 address the council.

OCTIVIUS
 I think we should enjoy our peace now,
 but be ready for any opposing threat.

CAESAR
 So you believe we should be content
 with our borders and not expand?

Octavius stares directly at Caesar.

OCTIVIUS

Sometimes a powerful army can extend their reach so far, that they begin to lose the most important aspect of that power...

CAESAR

And what is that, General?

OCTIVIUS

Respect.

INT. HALLWAY, ROMAN COUNCIL BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

The SENATORS gather around Octivius, praising him on his presentation earlier. One of Rome's most influential senators, Travian places a hand on his shoulder.

TRAVIAN

You hit the point dead on. Glory is more prominent when you are respected. Have you thought of entering politics? We could use someone with your tact and knowledge.

OCTIVIUS

This is as much politics as I want to indulge myself in at the moment.

Octivius glances past Travian's shoulder and notices Caesar a couple meters away waving him over.

OCTIVIUS (CONT'D)

Sorry, Senator Travian, may you excuse me.

Travian creates a path as Octivius walks over to Caesar. Caesar is not happy.

CAESAR

Why do you always insist on rivaling me, Octivius?

OCTIVIUS

How do you mean?

CAESAR

You know my position on expanding, so why do you feel the need to purposely oppose my views in front of others?

OCTIVIUS

With all due respect, you did ask for my opinion.

CAESAR

I do believe that a man of your stature would understand the importance of agreeing with his superiors.

OCTIVIUS

A man of my stature chooses his own destiny.

CAESAR

Watch the toes you step on, Octivius.

OCTIVIUS

Certainly not yours, Caesar.

Octivius turns to walk away.

CAESAR

I am curious to know how Barco ironically ended up on your team after all these years.

Octivius stops, thinks for a moment...

OCTIVIUS

Barco was found in the mine pits... Just like the rest of my slaves.

EXT. GATED CAMP - DAY

Donidas bruised and alone, sits in front of the gate, head down, still sulking from the defeat.

JUSTIN (O.S.)

Hello.

Donidas looks up and sees Justin standing on the opposite side.

JUSTIN

Were you victorious?

DONIDAS

No, I cost my team the victory... Do you know how that feels?

Justin shakes his head "no."

DONIDAS

Of course you don't.

Bashful, Justin stares at the ground.

JUSTIN

My mother said that I shouldn't talk to you.

DONIDAS

Why is that?

JUSTIN

She said because you might die soon.

DONIDAS

So why are you talking to me?

JUSTIN

Because I like you... I liked father too, but he died. I think that's why she said that.

Donidas picks a flower from the ground and hands it to Justin through the gate.

DONIDAS

Give this to your Mother and tell her I'm not going to die... I Promise.

SFX: HORNS SOUND OFF

CAMP GUARD (O.S.)

TRAINING TIME! ALL REPORT!

Donidas sticks his hand through the gate and pats Justin on the head.

DONIDAS

Run along now.

Justin smiles and runs away, holding the flower in the air. This raises Donidas' spirit slightly as he watches Justin disappear through the VILLAGE.

BARCO (O.S.)

Sometimes a loss can be the best win.

Donidas turns to Barco, standing a couple feet away with a wooden sword in one hand and a ball in the other.

BARCO

It forces you to train harder.

EXT. FIGHTING PIT, GATED CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

Donidas and Barco are facing each other, each with a wooden sword in their hand.

BARCO

There is still one aspect of your training that you will need to master before you are to fulfill your destiny.

DONIDAS

My destiny is to kill the man who murdered my father. How must I do that if I am stuck in here?

Barco sets into a fighting stance.

DONIDAS (CONT'D)

So, I will have to answer that question myself.

Barco attacks, swinging the wooden sword wildly as Donidas dodges every attempt. Barco finds an opening and kicks Donidas in the chest. Donidas hits ground and quickly rolls to his feet.

Barco throws his wooden sword down and quickly grabs Donidas, lifting him up in the air - SLAM! - Plowing Donidas into the ground.

TEAMMATES around the area STOP and STARE as Donidas rolls over, gasping from his hands and knees.

BARCO

Patience will be your greatest attribute as the days and nights pass you by. You must master this in order to become a great warrior...

Barco holds out his hand to Donidas...

BARCO (CONT'D)

Like your father was.

Donidas accepts Barco's hand and is helped up. TEAMMATES still stare, Donidas lowers his head, embarrassed.

BARCO (CONT'D)

Hold your head up, Donidas. There's no shame in this.

Donidas slowly lifts his head...

BARCO (CONT'D)

Are you ready?

He nods his head "yes," but his eyes say differently.

EXT. GATED CAMP - EVENING

It's becoming a common scene, as Donidas sits by the gate again, holding his head down, in deep thought.

MARCIA (O.S.)

Hi...

To his surprise it's Marcia, on the other side, standing next to an older man, VERUS (mid 50's), a man whose eyes hold a lot of secrets.

MARCIA

Father wanted to meet you.

Donidas stands, giving Verus his full attention.

VERUS

I am Verus.

DONIDAS

And I, Donidas.

Verus takes a moment to study him.

VERUS

I can already sense that you are a brave man...

DONIDAS

Then you are a fool, old one. I am only a slave.

VERUS

You may be a slave, but you are a slave with a purpose... I too was a Gladiator, many years ago. I kept it from my daughter, but upon hearing of grandson's liking to you, I felt compelled to mention it... Some secrets take time to make peace with.

DONIDAS

How did you win your freedom?

VERUS

That is a secret I still haven't made peace with.

Verus gives a faint smirk then turns to Marcia.

VERUS

Don't be so quick to judge, Daughter.
Just because a man is in a cage,
doesn't mean he'll stay in it forever.

Verus pats her on the shoulder and walks away. Marcia bashfully turns to Donidas.

MARCIA

Good luck in your next battle... Come
back in one piece.

DONIDAS

I will try.

Marcia's smile is faint but equally sincere as she turns and walks away, catching up to Verus as she heads back towards the VILLAGE.

Donidas watches, admiring Marcia's beautiful sway as she and Verus disappear in the distance...

ZOOM IN - Deep into Donidas' eyes...

INT. TUNNEL, COLISEUM - DAY

ZOOM OUT - From Donidas' eyes as he stands in full GLADIATOR GEAR. The BLACK/GOLD SASH of the LION is around his waist.

He stares out to the ARENA FLOOR, where the ROMAN ARMY TEAM battles another GLADIATOR TEAM...

EXT. ARENA FLOOR, COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

-Each member of the ROMAN ARMY TEAM wears the traditional MILITARY UNIFORM. SILVER BODY ARMOR, SILVER TROOPER HELMET. The SASH around a SOLDIERS waist is RED with SILVER TRIMMING. There's also a MOLD of CAESAR'S FACE on METAL EMBLEM.

The ROMAN ARMY CENTURION is running with the ball, and it's quite obvious that he stands out from the rest, wearing a SILVER GRECO-ROMAN HELMET with a RED CREST across the center, STAR symbol on the crown.

He dodges a couple incoming GLADIATORS and runs into the SCORING AREA...

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Donidas watches in awe, staring at this talented CENTURION.

CRIXUS (O.S.)

They call him Titicus.

Crixus joins him..

CRIXUS (CONT'D)

In his young age, he has already been named one of the greatest to have every graced the arena floor.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Titicus places the ball in the third SILVER CHALICE, stares up at the CROWD, and pumps his body armor like a gorilla.

CHEERS and BOOS echo through the COLISEUM..

VOICE (O.S.)

FIGHT CHALLENGE!

The CROWD quickly goes silent as Titicus turns to the muscular GLADIATOR, who is staring directly at him.

Titicus is not amused..

TITICUS

Not a wise thing to do, Slave.

The ANNOUNCER rushes over to this muscular GLADIATOR.

ANNOUNCER

Are you sure you want to commence with the fight challenge?

GLADIATOR

YES! I want to rip that arrogant bastard's head off.

The ANNOUNCER looks up at the CROWD.

ANNOUNCER

WE HAVE A FIGHT CHALLENGE!

The CROWD CHEERS as Titicus walks over to his TEAM'S SIDELINE.

TITICUS

Weapon please.

A ROMAN TEAMMATE hands Titicus a large SWORD. We notice an "X" prominently marked on the base of its blade..

ROMAN TEAMMATE

Make short work of him.

TITICUS

Not only am I going to make short work
out of this Gladiator, I'm going to
make an example out of him.

Titicus struts over to the CENTERLINE, where the GLADIATOR
waits, a spear-axe in his hands.

Titicus points his SWORD...

TITICUS

Fate has already answered your call, so
the move you make now will be your
last.

The GLADIATOR waste no time and attacks, swinging his spear-axe
wildly...

Titicus ducks the axe blade then quickly lunges forward with his
SWORD - SLICE! - Catching the GLADIATOR just below BODY ARMOR.

The GLADIATOR falls to his knees - SAME TIME - Titicus pulls
back with SWORD and swings for the fences - SLICE! - The
GLADIATOR'S head falls off... The CROWD gasps...

Titicus looks up at Caesar, who is sitting between Claudia and
Brutus in the VIP SECTION of TERRACE.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE

Caesar's turning red...

CLAUDIA

I am confused, dear. Wasn't he supposed
to wait for your order?

Caesar's angry silence says it all as he watches Titicus prance
around the ARENA FLOOR, pumping his SWORD to his chest, taunting
the CROWD...

BRUTUS

You created that monster, sir.

Caesar turns to Brutus, a cold stare.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Still watching, Donidas focuses on the SWORD in Titicus' hand.

BARCO (O.S.)

That's the Legendary Spartan Sword.

Barco steps up next to Donidas...

BARCO

Bares the same mark as your ribcage.

DONIDAS

Then why does he have it? Why is he holding my father's sword?

BARCO

Because at the moment... He is the one with the power.

Barco pats Donidas on the back...

BARCO (CONT'D)

Time to get ready, Donidas.

Donidas nods indicating he's ready, but his eyes still leave room for doubt.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The LIONS of TEAM OCTIVIUS are now on the ARENA FLOOR, battling against another GLADIATOR TEAM.

THE SCORE IS TIED, THREE BRONZE CHALICES TO THREE SILVER CHALICES...

HORNS SOUND OFF - THE CHARGE IS ON - An exhausted Lucius races to the ball set in the CENTER, his six bloody and bruised TEAMMATES sprinting behind him, including Barco and Donidas.

The opposing RUNNER on the other side is fast approaching, his six GLADIATOR TEAMMATES sprint behind him as well, equally bloody and bruised.

Lucius reaches the ball first and quickly tosses it backwards. Donidas catches it and waits as his four SOLDIERS run ahead, CLASHING with the opposing GLADIATORS. Barco stays behind Donidas.

Donidas sees his opportunity and takes off running...

An opposing GLADIATOR breaks free from a block. Donidas see this, and quickly tosses the ball backwards to Barco, before getting plowed to the ground.

Barco catches it, lowers his shoulders and trucks through opposing GLADIATORS.

Donidas quickly gets up and follows behind, as Barco drags an opposing GLADIATOR, hanging on his leg - BAM! - Another GLADIATOR smashes into Barco...

As Barco falls, he looks over and tosses the ball back to Donidas.

Donidas catches it and runs forward...

He rounds a SPIKE PIT as he continues up field, fast approaching a FIRE POT - SAME TIME - An opposing GLADIATOR takes an angle of pursuit and loads up for the big hit...

SLOW MOTION - As Donidas jumps over the opposing GLADIATOR, going through the FIRE...

EXT. THROUGHOUT THE STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar... Octivius... The CROWD... Everyone is frozen in awe...

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Donidas flies out the other side of the FIRE, lands on his feet, and runs all the way for the SCORE, placing the ball in the fourth and final BRONZE CHALICE.

The CROWD CHEERS as the LIONS of TEAM OCTIVIUS charge the obstacle riddled FIELD, celebrating their first victory.

Lucius rushes over to Donidas, embracing him in a hug.

LUCIUS
The Gods have blessed us on this day.
Our first victory!

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Marcellus pats Octivius on the back...

MARCELLUS
I guess congratulations are in order,
sir.

OCTIVIUS
Congratulations we can both share, my
friend.

Marcellus leans back in his seat and smiles, a sense of pride.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Titicus, helmet off, arms folded, focuses on Donidas as TEAM OCTIVIUS celebrates around him on the ARENA FLOOR.

FLACCUS (Late 20's), the bulky ROMAN ARMY BRUTE watches as well.

FLACCUS

The new Gladiator is quite bold.

TITICUS

He won't even last long enough to be a memory.

Titicus turns and walks away, disappearing deep into the TUNNEL.

EXT. MAINSTREET, ROME - NIGHT

Two WAGONS carrying the twenty-seven MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS ride through the STREETS as CITIZENS curiously watch on from the SIDEWALKS.

EXT. PUBLIC BUILDING, ROME - MOMENTS LATER

The two WAGONS stop in front of the PUBLIC BUILDING.

Donidas, Lucius, Barco and the rest of TEAM OCTIVIUS are confused as they exit the WAGONS and are herded like cattle by ROMAN GUARDS towards the PUBLIC BUILDING...

INT. RECEPTION ROOM, PUBLIC BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Senator Travian and a couple other SENATORS are waiting as the MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS pile into the area.

Travian holds up a cup of wine...

TRAVIAN

WELCOME TEAM OCTIVIUS!

They all stop and stare...

TRAVIAN (CONT'D)

We are some of the greatest minds of Rome and thought it would be great to honor your hard fought victory with a feast.

A large buffet table is presented, and the MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS can barely contain themselves at the sight.

TRAVIAN (CONT'D)

EAT ALL, DRINK ALL, AND LET THE WINNING CONTINUE!

They all cheer and rush the buffet table, grabbing any and everything.

MOMENTS LATER:

The MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS are devouring their food, enjoying their FEAST as if they haven't eaten in weeks.

Donidas eats at a table with other TEAMMATES. Lucius, a plate full of food, walks over and sits next to him. Donidas looks down at Lucius' plate which is stacked with an insane amount of meat.

DONIDAS

And you will eat all of this?

LUCIUS

I will eat until I am blind, fat, and dumb...

Barco takes a seat across from them, a big lamb leg on his plate.

BARCO

When I was a fighting Gladiator, the winners would receive a feast in their honor.

He pauses for a moment, staring off in a daze...

BARCO

I won a lot.

He shakes out of his daze, and takes a big chunk out of the lamb leg.

BARCO

(Mouth Full)

And hopefully, you will all get to see more of this as well.

OTHER SIDE OF ROOM - Octivius enters with Marcellus, scanning around the room looking for someone. Marcellus spots Donidas and points...

MARCELLUS

There he is, sir.

INT. CORRIDOR, PUBLIC BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

The area feels dark and hallow as Donidas stares at Octivius for a moment. His eyes looking for answers.

DONIDAS

Why has it taken this long?

OCTIVIUS

You had to grow, Donidas. We are on far different ends of the social pyramid, but as fate would have it, in order to fulfill both of our destinies, I need you... and you need me.

Octavius turns and walks, directing Donidas to follow.

DONIDAS

And Barco?

OCTIVIUS

Just another piece of the puzzle.

Octavius stops in front of a door.

OCTIVIUS (CONT'D)

Do you know where a man's power comes from, Donidas?

DONIDAS

His strength?

OCTIVIUS

A man could have the greatest strength in the world, but up against a hundred men, he is no match. Now give that man a powerful voice, and those hundred men start to listen.

(Beat)

Now, how do you take that power?

DONIDAS

Defeating him in battle?

OCTIVIUS

If you defeat him in battle, his message will live within his followers. You can take that power by showing his followers something different, give them new hope, and when the time comes they will forget that man's name and remember yours.

He pushes door open, inviting Donidas to look - INSIDE - where three NAKED WOMEN rests seductively on a large bed.

OCTIVIUS

Make them remember your name, Donidas.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR, COLISEUM - DUSK

RAIN is pouring down heavily turning the obstacle riddled FIELD into a cesspool.

THE LIONS OF TEAM OCTIVIUS HAVE THREE BRONZE CHALICES FILLED.

THE HORNS SOUNDS OFF - Lucius wins the CHARGE and tosses the ball backwards...

Donidas, bloody and bruised, receives the ball as opposing GLADIATORS bully pass his TEAMMATES who are suppose to be blocking, but are too exhausted.

Donidas knows he's in trouble and scrambles around. An opposing GLADIATOR dives at him, misses, and slides right into a SPIKE PIT... Instant Death... The CROWD gasps.

Donidas runs for an opening and spots Lucius running wide open towards the SCORING AREA.

Donidas quickly loads up for the throw - WHAP! - Gets BLASTED as the ball leaves his hand, crashing face first into the mud.

Lucius sees the ball in the air, positions himself and catches it in the SCORING AREA.

BACK TO - Donidas sprawled out in the mud...

A POWERFUL ROAR is suddenly heard throughout the COLISEUM.. The CROWD goes silent.

Donidas stands and slowly turns, noticing the chained LION a couple feet away, looking very hungry.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar, sitting between Claudia and Brutus, smirks as he glances over at the SECTION where Octivius nervously sits.

CAESAR

(To Brutus)

It looks like my old friend is going to lose a gladiator.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Donidas stands in place as the LION paces back and forth, giving warning GROWLS.

LUCIUS (O.S.)
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, DONIDAS? RUN!

BARCO (O.S.)
GET OUT OF THERE! WE HAVE ALREADY HAVE
THE VICTORY!

THE LION ATTACKS - Getting closer and closer until the CHAIN untangles and runs out, catching the LION in mid-stride...

SLOW MOTION - As it takes a vicious swipe, inches from Donidas' face, who doesn't flinch as he stands his ground.

The LION rages for a moment, eventually tires, and plops down, Respect shown in it's eyes.

Donidas takes a couple steps back and glances up at the shell-shocked CROWD.

DONIDAS
I AM DONIDAS!

He raises his fist in triumph...

The COLISEUM immediately erupts in cheers as the CROWD goes crazy with excitement.

THE GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS rush the obstacle riddled FIELD, celebrating the victory.

Barco remains at the SIDELINES, watching as TEAMMATES hoist Donidas on their shoulders.

BARCO
(To himself)
And this is how it all begins.

MONTAGE BEGINS:

EXT. ARENA FLOOR, COLISEUM - MULTIPLE DAYS

The GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS are battling multiple GLADIATOR TEAMS... Donidas displays great ability with the ball, SCORING again and again.

EXT. GATED CAMP - NIGHT

TEAM OCTIVIUS enjoys yet another feast. The gate doors open, as 2 WAGONS enter. Curious, everyone in the area, including Donidas stops eating and stares - SUDDENLY - GORGEOUS WOMEN strut out of WAGONS...

INT. CABIN, GATED CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

Donidas lies between 2 NAKED WOMEN. He looks over at Lucius, who's lying between 2 WOMEN as well... "This is the life."

EXT. ARENA FLOOR, COLISEUM - DAY

Donidas displays great ability on DEFENSE, hitting opposing GLADIATORS, carrying the ball.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - DAY

As CHEERS for "Donidas" echo through the COLISEUM, Caesar leans back in his seat, arms folded, definitely taking notice, and not in a good way.

INT. ROMAN BATH HOUSE - DUSK

Donidas relaxes in a BATH with 4 BEAUTIFUL WOMEN at his side. Octivius enters with several POLITICIANS, introducing them to the new famous Donidas.

EXT. MAINSTREET, ROME - DAY

Donidas, in GLADIATOR GEAR, stands proudly on an OPEN-CARRIAGE, riding through the STREETS. He waves to the CROWD below. A group KIDS chase the CARRIAGE, waving and cheering. Donidas smiles and tosses a ball out to them. One of the KIDS catches it, the others are jealous.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR, COLISEUM - DAY

Donidas runs into the SCORING AREA. He places ball in fourth and final BRONZE CHALICE as the CROWD begins chanting his name.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar glances over at the SECTION where Octivius is applauding the victory. Octivius senses the stares and gives him a look back, accompanied with a rivaling smirk. Caesar quickly looks away, turning red.

MONTAGE END:**INT. BEDROOM, PALACE - NIGHT**

3 NAKED WOMEN casually walk around the room. Titicus sits up in his bed, uninterested, staring at a very unhappy Caesar.

CAESAR

All of Rome is shouting his name.

TITICUS

And...

CAESAR

Are you so blind? The people are just waiting for someone like him to take your place on the mantle, and if you don't watch it... It just might happen...

Titicus suddenly jumps out of bed, pushes one of the WOMEN down in the process as he backs Caesar into the wall, staring directly into his eyes.

TITICUS

With all this talk about being overshadowed... How do I know you're not talking about your own fear of decline?

CAESAR

Maybe I'm talking about both of our fates.

This strikes a nerve. Titicus turns away, thinking heavily.

INT. TUNNEL, COLISEUM - DAY

The GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS have just finished a battle and are walking back into the TUNNEL from the ARENA FLOOR. They are all bloody and worn, but triumphant after a great victory.

Donidas takes his helmet off as he walks in, his "NAME" being echoed from the CROWD outside.

He suddenly receives a SHOULDER BUMP and stops...

TITICUS (O.S.)

Indulge these moments. Enjoy the food, enjoy the wine, and most of all... Enjoy the women.

Donidas doesn't recognize Titicus without his Roman helmet and attempts to walk on, but Titicus grabs him by the arm...

TITICUS

But I assure you, in another week. All those people will forget your name.

Donidas shrugs away and pushes Titicus against the wall. TEAMMATES in the TUNNEL stop and stare as Donidas and Titicus size each other up.

DONIDAS

You are Titicus?

TITICUS

I am.

DONIDAS

You have something that belongs to me.

TITICUS

Whatever it is, slave... Take it from me.

Titicus smiles and storms away, bumping into the GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS as he passes.

INT. OCTIVIUS' LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Candle light illuminates this nice relaxing setting.

Octavius rests on a long-couch, half-naked, holding a golden cup of wine. He takes a sip then stares at the cup, fixated on its luxurious beauty.

KNOCK AT THE DOOR...

OCTIVIUS

Come in.

The door opens, Travian walks in...

OCTIVIUS (CONT'D)

Senator Travian, what a pleasant surprise. What brings you to my quarters?

TRAVIAN

All of Rome is talking about Donidas.

OCTIVIUS

Yes I know.

TRAVIAN

When are you going to let Rome hear your voice like your father intended?

OCTIVIUS

You have been a great friend and ally to my family for many years, Travian. And I thank you for your loyalty...

TRAVIAN

When are you going to act, Octavius?

Octavius takes a moment, collects his thoughts as he stares into the golden cup once again.

OCTIVIUS

My father warned me upon his deathbed
of a prophecy, and I heeded his words
ever so carefully...

(Beat)

He said to let patience and virtue be
my best ally, for I will rival a great
leader, a leader who will turn human
before my very eyes, when the pieces
are set in place for me to overshadow
him, but my true reign will come when a
ghost of a Spartan avenges his own
death.

Travian sees someone in his peripherals and quickly turns, it's
Claudia, standing half-naked in the doorway of another room.

OCTIVIUS

The pieces of the puzzle are slowly
coming together, and if you sit down,
I'll gladly enlighten you, my friend.

Travian takes a chair and calmly sits down, he's all ears.

EXT. GATED CAMP - NIGHT

The FULL MOON illuminates the night sky.

Donidas sits alone by a fire pit, trapped in deep thought.

BARCO (O.S.)

Are you well?

Donidas looks up as Barco joins him.

DONIDAS

I have many thoughts, Barco. Wondering
what would change if we succeed, or
what we stand to lose if we fail.

BARCO

If we are victorious against the Roman
Army, the attention you will receive
will be that of the Gods. But, I must
warn you, Donidas, if you stray away
from the path, the Gods will make you a
monster.

DONIDAS

Is that what happened to you?

BARCO

Yes...

DONIDAS
But you won your freedom.

BARCO
I didn't win my freedom... it was given
to me.

Barco looks up at the night sky, takes a deep breath.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR, COLISEUM - FLASHBACK - DAY

A bloody Barco in his 20's, drops his hatchets and falls to his knees, the SUN shining in his eyes as he stares up at a shadowy figure, holding large SWORD.

The shadowy figure steps up, his face barely seen through the grooves of his SPARTAN HELMET..

It's Theonidas, also bloody and bruised.

BARCO (V.O.)
Back then, your opponent chose your
fate.

Theonidas turns to the CROWD, holding up his SPARTAN SWORD..

BARCO (V.O.)
By that time, I had already burned my
bridges..

KILL! MERCY! - Echo through the COLISEUM as Theonidas turns back Barco, who braces for the final blow.

BARCO (V.O.)
So, I was ready to die.

Theonidas throws down the SPARTAN SWORD, Barco looks up, puzzled.

BARCO
I don't want your mercy... Finish me!

Theonidas holds out his hand..

THEONIDAS
But this is not mercy, Barco, this is
respect. The greatest power we could
both share.

Barco takes moment. He stares up at this humble man and accepts the gesture as Theonidas helps him up.

The CROWD is dead silent.

THEONIDAS

They will remember both of our names
this day.

Suddenly, the COLISEUM erupts in CHEERS. The CROWD chants both of their names.

BARCO (V.O.)

Your father was a far better man than
me...

Barco looks down at the SPARTAN SWORD then back at Theonidas, who is embracing the CROWD'S energy.

BARCO (V.O.)

Because, I would have killed him if he
were at my mercy.

EXT. BATTLE FIELD, FOREST - FLASHBACK CONTINUES - DAWN

Barco is armed with his two hatchets, Theonidas with his SPARTAN SWORD. They are ROMAN SOLDIERS now, fighting side by side, outnumbered but not outmatched as they face a massive BARBARIAN opposition.

BARCO (V.O.)

Within days, our freedom was granted,
only to be forced into the Roman Army.

IT'S A SLAUGHTER HOUSE - Barco and Theonidas rip through the BARBARIANS, cutting them down one by one.

BARCO (V.O.)

For two years, we did Rome's bidding as
they expanded their empire. We went
from heroes of the coliseum, to the
heroes of the Roman Army.

Everything goes silent as Theonidas stares down at the mayhem, his eyes drained.

BARCO (V.O.)

It didn't settle well with your father.
He grew weary of the fighting. He
wanted another life...

Theonidas nods a farewell to Barco and walks away, dragging his SPARTAN SWORD with him.

BARCO (V.O.)

So he deserted.

EXT. TOP OF A RIDGE - FLASHBACK CONTINUES - DAY

BARCO (V.O.)
Years later, we met again...

Barco, Roman uniform, stands in front of Theonidas, who is wearing normal village attire.

BARCO
Heed my warning, Theonidas. They have found you and they want you to come back.

THEONIDAS
I am not going back to those Roman Dogs.

BARCO
But they want us both back in Arena. This time, to dawn a new form of glory.

Theonidas takes a moment, stares at his friend.

THEONIDAS
Have you ever wanted to raise a family, Barco?

BARCO
I've been a slave my whole life, I know nothing of it.

THEONIDAS
Raising a family could be the greatest thing a warrior can ever get to do with his life...
(Beat)
The answer is NO, my friend... I have done my time... you have too.

BARCO
They were ordered by the Senate to bring you back. By force, if necessary.

THEONIDAS
Then I will fight.

Theonidas turns to walk away but stops a couple steps in.

THEONIDAS
One more thing, Barco...

Theonidas lifts his shirt, showing the "X" scar on his ribcage.

THEONIDAS (CONT'D)

I have branded my own with the same mark. When the time comes, please know what to do.

Barco takes a deep breath as Theonidas walks away, disappearing out of view...

FADE TO WHITE:

FLASHBACK ENDS:

EXT. GATED CAMP - PRESENT - NIGHT

Donidas is speechless as he stares at Barco.

BARCO

Trust me, Donidas. You will know your place soon enough, on the Ides of March, questions will be answered.

DONIDAS

The Ides of March?

BARCO

The end of the great tournament. We must win if we are to know our fates.

Barco pats Donidas on the back and walks away, leaving Donidas to his thoughts.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COLISEUM - DAY

AERIAL VIEW - As the large CROWD of ROMAN CITIZENS wait to get in, anticipation so high, the tension could be cut with a butter knife.

INT. GLADIATOR DUNGEON, COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

Donidas, in full GLADIATOR GEAR, sits nervously, helmet shaking in his lap. The twenty-three GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS gear up around him.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR, COLISEUM - MOMENTS LATER

The CROWD goes silent as the ANNOUNCER stands at the CENTERLINE of the FIELD.

ANNOUNCER

THE STAGE IS SET FOR BATTLE!

INT. TUNNEL, COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

Titicus, in full ARMY GEAR, stands in front of his ROMAN ARMY TEAM, pumped up and ready to go. Flaccus, his trustee ARMY BRUTE stands next to him.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
TWO EPIC TEAMS WILL BATTLE TODAY, BUT
ONE, I ASSURE YOU...!

INT. OPPOSITE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Donidas stands between Barco and Lucius, waiting in front of their TEAMMATES...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
WILL WALK OFF BLOODY, BUT VICTORIOUS...!

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The ANNOUNCER points to a TUNNEL...

ANNOUNCER
Will it be...? JULIUS CAESAR'S ARMY TEAM!

Titicus runs out with his ROMAN ARMY TEAM, the CROWD reacts with BOOS and CHEERS.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octivius and Marcellus are at their seats, nervously glancing over at Caesar, who is applauding from his SECTION, sitting between Brutus and Claudia.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The ANNOUNCER points to the opposite TUNNEL...

ANNOUNCER
Or will it be...? THE LIONS OF GENERAL
OCTIVIUS!

Donidas runs out with his TEAMMATES, the CROWD CHEERS loudly.

ANNOUNCER
LET THE BATTLE BEGIN!

HORNS SOUND OFF...

MONTAGE BEGINS:**EXT. ARENA FLOOR**

Lucius loses the CHARGE to the ARMY RUNNER, who quickly tosses the ball backwards to Titicus. Titicus allows his SOLDIERS time to block as he tucks the ball in and RUNS..

Donidas braces for tackle. Titicus jumps clear over him and lands on his feet. He breaks a couple more tackles and runs into the SCORING AREA. Titicus jogs to the first SILVER CHALICE, places the ball in it.

EXT. STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

The CROWD expresses their hate, as Titicus pumps his chest like a gorilla, taunting them from the ARENA FLOOR.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR

Donidas runs with the ball. He gets blasted by Flaccus and crashes to the dirt, sliding close to a FIRE POT. The SOLDIERS of the ARMY TEAM quickly pounce on Donidas, stripping the ball away.

Flaccus picks up the ball and runs. He trucks through a GLADIATOR SOLDIER, sending the poor soul into the HOT TAR TUB.

ON THE SIDELINE - Crixus, frustrated, selects another GLADIATOR from the now twenty-two MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS. The GLADIATOR takes a nervous gulp as he rushes onto the FIELD to replace his fallen teammate.

Flaccus is tackled by Barco. They roll back and forth, fighting for the ball, both TEAMS suddenly pile in - IT'S CHAOS!

The ball pops out of the pile, Titicus picks it up as Lucius darts towards him. Titicus stiff-arms him to the dirt and throws the ball to the ARMY RUNNER, who catches it over Donidas for the SCORE. The second SILVER CHALICE is filled.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Octivius is covering his face, definitely doesn't like what he's seeing.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR

Donidas has the ball and is scrambling around deep inside Roman Army territory. Flaccus closes in, Donidas tosses the ball before getting PLOWED by him.

Barco catches the ball, lowers his shoulders, and plows in for the SCORE, falling onto the patch of GRASS. The first BRONZE CHALICE is filled.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Marcellus pats Octivius on the back...

MARCELLUS
See, you must have fate, sir.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR

Lucius loses the CHARGE. The ARMY RUNNER tosses the ball to Titicus...

Titicus makes the GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS look bad, especially Donidas as he dodges and breaks several tackles, eventually running in for the SCORE, placing the ball in the third SILVER CHALICE.

EXT. CAESARS' SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar leans back in his seat, delighted.

MONTAGE ENDS:**EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS**

THE ROMAN ARMY TEAM IS ONE MORE SCORE TO VICTORY...

TEAM OCTIVIUS, NOT SO MUCH... As Donidas runs with the ball, desperately trying to spark some momentum for his team as he crosses the CENTERLINE and into the Roman Army territory...

CRACK! - Titicus crashes into Donidas, slamming him into a large JAGGED ROCK.

The ball comes loose. Flaccus scoops it up but is immediately tackled by Lucius. Both TEAMS pile up again - CHAOS! - The ball pops out of the pile and rolls into a SPIKE PIT.

HORNS SOUND OFF - Stopping the action as GUARDS rush onto the FIELD to fish out the ball.

Donidas is still on the ground, cringing, holding his ribcage. Titicus casually walks over and sneaks in a KICK... Donidas whiplashes, blood flies out his mouth, helmet knocked off.

Barco, Lucius and other TEAMMATES rush over...

BARCO

You must get up, Donidas! They will summon the guards.

Head spinning... Vision blurry... Donidas tries to get up, succumbs to his injuries and crumbles back to the ground.

Two ROMAN GUARDS push through Barco, Lucius and TEAMMATES and walk up to the injured Donidas. They take their swords out and look up at Caesar.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

The CROWD pleads "MERCY" as Caesar stands, pondering his decision. He stares directly over at the VIP SECTION, where Octavius sits in a nervous sweat.

CAESAR

Looks like my old friend is also at my mercy. Wouldn't you say, Brutus?

BRUTUS

Rivalries are rivalries, sir. But public opinion will not be kind if you decide to have that Gladiator killed.

CAESAR

Does it look like I care about public opinion?

BRUTUS

That may be so, but he is considered the peoples hero now, and I was always taught, before killing a hero, you must show the people that he's human. Look at him, Caesar, the hero is cowering for your mercy. Isn't that enough?

Caesar stares down at Donidas, cringing on the ARENA FLOOR as the GUARDS stand over him, weapons ready.

Caesar raises his hand, thumb in the neutral position... The CROWD gasps then rejoices at the decision as Caesar slowly puts his thumb up...

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The two GUARDS back away from Donidas, as Lucius and Barco rush over to help him up.

TITICUS (O.S.)
You are nothing more than a slave,
Donidas.

As Lucius holds Donidas up, Barco quickly turns to Titicus.

BARCO
Watch your tongue.

TITICUS
He is a coward who cannot finish what
he's started. I guess his training was
inadequate.

BARCO
FIGHT CHALLENGE!

The CROWD suddenly goes silent.

Donidas looks over at Barco as Lucius assists him back to the SIDELINE.

DONIDAS
(Short of breath)
No... You don't have to...

Barco ignores this plea, shifting his attention to the ANNOUNCER, rushing over to him.

ANNOUNCER
Are you sure you want to have a Fight
Challenge?

TITICUS (O.S.)
You do not want to do this old one,
your way past your prime to handle me.

BARCO
Yes!

The ANNOUNCER turns to the CROWD.

ANNOUNCER
FIGHT CHALLENGE!

The CROWD goes crazy...

Barco and Titicus go to their respective SIDELINES to pick up their weapons.

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Marcellus turns to a very nervous Octivius.

MARCELLUS

This is not part of the plan. What is Barco thinking?

OCTIVIUS

It is in the Gods hands now.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Barco and Titicus meet at the CENTERLINE. Barco holds up his two hatchets, Titicus brandishes the SPARTAN SWORD.

BARCO

That sword belonged to a great man.

TITICUS

The one who holds it now is even greater.

Barco ATTACKS, swinging his hatchets wildly as Titicus quickly defends with SPARTAN SWORD.

ON THE SIDELINE - Lucius helps Donidas take off his body armor.

LUCIUS

This should help.

Donidas holds his cracked ribs, covering his scar as he limps closer to the FIELD, getting a perfect view...

BACK TO FIGHT - Barco gives Titicus a powerful BOOT to the body armor. Titicus hits the dirt and quickly rolls to his feet as Barco advances again...

Titicus swings the SPARTAN SWORD, knocking one of the hatchets out of Barco's hand. Barco swings his other hatchet. Titicus quickly ducks it and lunges forward...

SHANK! - The SPARTAN SWORD penetrates just below Barco's body armor. Barco lets out a grunt, and falls to his knees.

Titicus smiles as he pulls the SPARTAN SWORD out.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar stands, thumb in the neutral position. He gloats to himself as he looks down at Brutus, sitting next to him.

CAESAR

How do you think public opinion will be
if I chose to have the Great Barco
killed today?

BRUTUS

I do not know, sir.

Caesar receives a nudge from Claudia.

CLAUDIA

Only Titicus isn't looking at you.

CAESAR

What?

Caesar quickly turns his attention back to ARENA FLOOR..

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Titicus stares down at Barco.

TITICUS

You are at my mercy, old one.

He raises SPARTAN SWORD, ready to deliver final blow..

BARCO

A better man held that sword to me once
before, if it is my fate, then I take
great pride dying by it.

TITICUS

The man you speak of, did you know him?

BARCO

Like a brother.

Titicus takes a moment. He stares at the SPARTAN SWORD, focusing on the "X" mark on its blade.

TITICUS

Can I tell you something, old one? When
I am alone, truly alone, I feel this
sword is the only thing I have worthy
in this world.

Titicus takes a step back, and looks up at Caesar.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar smiles lightly as he looks down at Titicus.

CAESAR
 (Re: Brutus and Claudia)
 You see, at the end of the day, Titicus
 knows who to bow to? And to prove it, I
 just might let Barco live.

Caesar keeps his thumb in the neutral position... The CROWD gasps
 in anticipation...

Titicus suddenly looks away from Ceasar.

CAESAR
 (Shocked)
 What... What is he doing?

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Titicus stares down at Barco again.

TITICUS
 But who said I was going to give you
 the dignity of dying by this sword.

Barco stares up, sun shining in his eyes, a familiar scene from
 the past...

BARCO
 When you take off that armor... That
 shell... What do you see?

Titicus pauses, this strikes a nerve.

BARCO
 I know what you see... And I'm sorry I
 couldn't protect you.

BAM! - Titicus suddenly kicks Barco in the chest, right into a
 SPIKE PIT... Blood splatters up.

DONIDAS (O.S.)
 NOOOOO!

Titicus looks over at Donidas, a rivaling glare...

EXT. VIP SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

BOOING ERUPTS THROUGH THE COLISEUM...

Octavius, furious, looks over at CAESAR'S SECTION, where Caesar is still holding his thumb in neutral position.

OCTIVIUS
HE DID NOT WAIT FOR YOUR ORDER, CAESAR!
YOU MUST ARREST THAT SOLDIER FOR
DISOBEYING YOUR RULES!

Caesar blatantly ignores the rant and quickly puts his hand down. He taps Brutus and Claudia, signaling it's time to go.

OCTIVIUS
DO YOU HEAR ME, CAESAR!

ROMAN GUARDS accompany Caesar, Brutus and Claudia as they walk towards the exit.

OCTIVIUS
DO YOU HEAR ME, JULIUS!

Caesar stops, takes a deep breath and looks over at Octavius.

CAESAR
This is my Rome, Octavius. Not yours.
And if you call me out by my name
again, I swear I will take everything
from you this time.

Caesar's group continues on. Octavius and Claudia sneak a quick glance at each other as she exits with Caesar.

Octavius then takes a deep breath and looks over to the POLITICIAN SECTION, catching eyes with Travian, who nods with respect.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

THE BATTLE CONTINUES - Titicus runs with the ball as GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS chase after him..

Lucius gets a good angle. Titicus trucks him with ease and runs right onto the patch of GRASS for the score.

THE CROWD BOOS, as Titicus struts over to the fourth and final SILVER CHALICE, placing the ball in it.

HORNS SOUND OFF... THE BATTLE IS OVER.

ON THE SIDELINE - Donidas, grieving and immobile, Donidas watches as GUARDS fish Barco's mutilated body out of SPIKE PIT.

EXT. GATED CAMP - DAY

Donidas sits by the gate, rib cage wrapped in bandages, head slump down.

MARCIA (O.S.)

Hi.

He slowly looks up at Marcia, standing on the opposite side.

MARCIA

We traveled to Rome to watch your battle yesterday...

He has no words for her, he just stares back down at the ground.

MARCIA

I didn't want to take Justin, but Father insisted, saying Justin will eventually see the horrors of man one day so he might as well see how a hero handles it.

Still no response, she takes a deep breath...

MARCIA

I don't claim to know your world, Donidas, but I felt a piece of it yesterday. When you scored, the crowd felt your triumph, when you were down, the crowd felt your wounds as well... I felt your wounds.

Donidas slowly lifts his head, tears in his eyes.

DONIDAS

I'm no hero.

MARCIA

Please Donidas, in these moments you must...

DONIDAS

Please go.

Marcia takes a moment, staring down at this defeated man.

MARCIA

Then I will wait, and maybe you'll become the hero my son believes in.

She turns, takes a deep breath and slowly walks away.

INT. ROMAN COUNCIL ASSEMBLY - DAY

The SENATORS in the area spew tons of complaints. Caesar sits in his high seat, very annoyed as Travian stands on the center platform...

TRAVIAN

Rome has all the territories it can handle at the moment. If we allow ourselves to expand farther, then what's stopping the citizens of those territories from revolting and breaking away from Rome's grip? I say we stop while we are ahead.

He stares up at Caesar...

TRAVIAN

Of course, having a powerful leader is fine. But having a power crazed gluttonous, I think most of you would agree, is not healthy for the Republic.

Caesar has heard enough and steps over to the platform.

CAESAR

So what do you suggest Senator Travian? Wait until our enemies grow stronger, and pick our territories off one by one until they eventually come knocking on Rome's front door?

TRAVIAN

We appointed you to defend Rome at its darkest moments, and you did. But, your legend has been overshadowed by your greed and the time will come when you will have to relinquish your position to a stronger, more fit leader...

(Beat)

And that time should be now.

Most of the SENATORS nod their heads, agreeing with Travian.

CAESAR

I am the fittest to lead Rome, and I will accept no challengers regarding this issue. I have the power, I have the control...

Travian steps up to him...

SENATOR TRAVIAN

If you cannot even control your "so-called" son, Titicus, who consistently defies your order in front of the people, then how do you expect the people of Rome to continue to let you to speak for it?

CAESAR

(Alarmed)

My "so-called" son?

Travian gives a contrived smile as he leans into Caesar's ear.

SENATOR TRAVIAN

(Whispering)

I know what he is.

SUDDENLY - Caesar pulls out a dagger and STABS him in the neck.

The SENATORS in the area cringe in horror. Travian quickly grabs his throat, blood shooting out, and falls off the platform.

Caesar steps to the edge and stares down at Travian, on the ground choking on his own blood.

CAESAR

You, Senator Travian, seemed to have lost your voice. Therefore, have nothing to speak for.

Caesar glances up at the shocked SENATORS.

CAESAR

Now where was I?

SUDDENLY - ROMAN GUARDS burst in, spears in hand, standing at attention, ready for anything.

CAESAR

Oh yeah... The Roman Army swears its allegiance to me, and in one command I could have each and every one of you spineless pigs slaughtered on the spot...

(Beat)

NOW SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP!

The SENATORS, compliant, all sit down as Travian lies dead on the floor. Caesar composes himself and paces around the platform.

CAESAR

The battles fought in the Coliseum have conditioned the people of Rome to accept this brand of violence. Kids grow up knowing they can never be gladiators in the arena, so they become soldiers, all because I created the illusion of glory by making a simple ball more powerful than the sword... I plan to use this illusion to expand my campaign far beyond the limitations of our current empire... I will reach the edge of the earth, Gentlemen, and make all of it Rome.

(Beat)

I will open this up for debate.

The SENATORS look at each other, hesitant to speak. SENATOR #1 has the balls, he slowly raises his hand and stands up.

Caesar acknowledges him...

CAESAR

Go ahead, you may speak freely.

SENATOR #1

I believe...

Caesar snaps his fingers - SWOOP! - An ARROW flies in and pierces SENATOR #1's heart, killing him instantly.

Caesar looks up at the ROMAN ARCHER, perched on the second floor balcony, nods to him, then looks back at the stunned SENATORS.

CAESAR

Anyone else?

INT. OCTIVIUS' LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Octavius is fast asleep on his LONG COUCH.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Octavius jumps awake, he slowly walks to the door and opens it...

OCTIVIUS

Claudia?

Claudia puts her hood down, walks in with a sense of urgency.

OCTIVIUS

What is it?

CLAUDIA
Senator Travian is dead.

OCTIVIUS
Wha...?

CLAUDIA
Caesar killed him. In the Senate
Building, in front of everyone.

Octavius calmly walks over to a table and grabs his golden cup.

OCTIVIUS
Travian was the only one in the Senate
who knew of my plan.

He takes a sip from it...

OCTIVIUS
I will mourn him deeply.

CLAUDIA
We must leave Rome, Octavius... Tonight.

Octavius places the golden cup down.

OCTIVIUS
And why is that?

SWOOM! - A SPEAR flies through the window, passes between their faces and sticks into the wall. Claudia SCEAMS. They both fall to the floor, taking cover.

Octavius gets up, grabs his sword and braces for action. He rushes to the door and glances outside, seeing a silhouette of someone running off in the distance.

He takes a deep breath and looks over at Claudia...

OCTIVIUS
Were you followed?

CLAUDIA
I... I don't think so.

Octavius slams the door and walks over to the spear sticking into the wall, analyzing it.

OCTIVIUS
You're right, Claudia. It's time for us
to take a brief leave of absences.

INT. BALL ROOM, CAESAR'S PALACE - NIGHT

Caesar, fuming mad, sits in his throne, staring down at Titicus.

CAESAR

I gave you a direct order to kill
General Octivius, and all you can tell
me is you missed.

TITICUS

Well, next time you can do your own
dirty work.

CAESAR

I pray to the Gods everyday that one
day you would spare me of your childish
rebellion. Why must you always
challenge me?

Titicus takes a moment, grins heavily, knowing exactly what
buttons to push.

TITICUS

Do you really want to know the truth?

CAESAR

YES!

TITICUS

I didn't want to make the mistake of
accidentally hitting the other person in
the room, and if I would've walked in
and killed him by sword, I would have
had to kill her for being a witness.

CAESAR

Her?

TITICUS

Claudia.

SLAM! SLAM! SLAM! - Caesar repeatedly pounds his fist against
the armrest in the biggest TEMPER TANTRUM you've ever seen.

EXT. GATED CAMP - DAY

The MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS gather around Marcellus, standing
on the platform.

MARCELLUS

I am sad to inform you that the owner
of the team, General Octivius
disappeared from Rome last night.

Everyone's shocked and gasps...

MARCELLUS

Since I am second in ownership, I will oversee all the sponsorship and welfare of the team. This is not the end for us...

CAESAR (O.S.)

What makes you so sure?

Everyone turns, seeing Caesar, who is mounted on a horse. Titicus and several ROMAN SOLDIERS ride up behind him.

CAESAR

Since your owner has fled Rome and escaped his responsibilities, I have taken the liberty of seizing all the team's assets and contributions.

MARCELLUS

How can this be? We still have Sponsors who are willing to provide what is necessary for us to stay here.

CAESAR

Your biggest sponsor was Senator Travian, was it not?

MARCELLUS

Yes...

CAESAR

Well, He's dead.

Marcellus is speechless. Caesar looks down at the low spirited SLAVES of TEAM OCTIVIUS.

CAESAR

The wagons will be here tomorrow to transport you all to the Coliseum dungeons where you all will be spending the remainder of the season.

Donidas, standing in the crowd of his TEAMMATES, clinches his fist as he looks up at Caesar, pure hatred in his eyes.

CAESAR

Unless you win the championship, which is highly unlikely, you will all be sent to the quarries.

Donidas has heard enough and steps forward, standing between his TEAMMATES and Caesar.

DONIDAS

You seem to be threatened by us.

Caesar is not amused...

CAESAR

And why would I be afraid of a bunch of slaves?

DONIDAS

Because if we meet your team in the great tournament, we will prevail, fate is on our side. When that happens, things will change for you, and that's what you're afraid of.

A beat... Caesar stares down at Donidas, something about this slave makes him feel uneasy.

Titicus jumps off his horse, grabs the SPARTAN SWORD, and strides over to Donidas. They stare into each other's eyes, sizing each other up, there's no backing down.

DONIDAS

I will make them forget your name as well. I swear on Barco's ghost.

Titicus pushes Donidas to the ground, holding the SPARTAN SWORD to his throat.

Lucius and a couple TEAMMATES step forward. The mounted SOLDIERS behind Caesar quickly draw their weapons. Having no weapons of their own, Lucius and the TEAMMATES reluctantly back off.

CAESAR

TITICUS, NO!

Titicus looks over at Caesar...

CAESAR

We must allow him to fall in the arena, in front of the people. After that, you can kill him like the dog he is.

Titicus turns back to Donidas, pressing the blade of the SPARTAN SWORD against his neck, drawing a blood.

TITICUS

Come season's end. You will have no name.

Titicus gives Donidas a slight kick to the gut and walks back to his horse. Donidas cringes in pain, his disenchanted TEAMMATES, helpless.

CAESAR

I guess that is all.

Caesar, Titicus and the other ROMAN SOLDIERS exit the camp as Donidas watches from ground, covering his stomach.

EXT. GATED CAMP - EVENING

Donidas sits by the gate, very defeated, all seems lost.

VERUS (O.S.)

I remember Barco.

Donidas slowly glances up at Verus, Marcia's father, standing on the other side.

VERUS

He was truly one of the greats...
(Deep breath)
I was not.

DONIDAS

I thought only great Gladiators won their freedom back then.

Verus looks away, this subject burns deep.

VERUS

I fought over twenty fights in the arena... I suffered three defeats through mercy, the rest... all victories.

DONIDAS

Some would consider that great.

A Beat... Verus takes a deep breath...

EXT. GLADIATOR CAMP, ROME - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A younger VERUS (20's) stands inside a cell, hands on the bars, staring deep into a beautiful WOMAN'S eyes.

VERUS (V.O.)

A girl would come visit me every night, while I sat in my cage. The most beautiful thing I ever laid my eyes on.

Their lips connect as they kiss between the bars.

VERUS (V.O.)

And I fell in love.

EXT. GATED CAMP - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

Donidas is intrigued by this story and stands, wanting to hear more.

VERUS

As my love grew for her, I started to wonder about my fate in the arena...

EXT. GLADIATOR CAMP, ROME - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

The beautiful WOMAN opens the gate, freeing Verus, who quickly embraces her in his arms for the first time.

VERUS (V.O.)

It was then, after the discovery that I was to fight one of the greatest to ever grace the arena...

They sneak past a guard, hand in hand, and disappear into the darkness.

VERUS (V.O.)

I escaped with my love, choosing love over glory.

EXT. GATED CAMP - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

Verus looks down for a moment, takes a deep breath, almost in shame.

DONIDAS

The Gladiator you were to fight?

VERUS

Theonidas, the last Spartan warrior.

DONIDAS

My father.

Verus slowly looks up...

VERUS

I knew I saw something in you... I heard he fell to Caesar by his own sword.

DONIDAS

I was a child, and I witnessed...

An awkward silence as Donidas and Verus take a moment to collect their thoughts.

DONIDAS

So was it worth it, Verus? Choosing
love over glory?

VERUS

My love died giving birth to my
daughter. I feared it was my karma, I
gave up my honor and had to accept it..

Verus stares into Donidas eyes, the sincerest look a man can
give another man.

VERUS

I made a promise I would never let
anything harm my little girl.. I'm
getting older, Donidas.. So I pray you
win your freedom.

Verus nods and walks away, leaving Donidas in deep thought.

INT. TEAM CABIN, GATED CAMP - NIGHT

MEMEBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS are bunched up, some toss and turn,
some sleep soundly.

Donidas lays awake, his eyes fixated on a beam of moonlight
peaking through a crack on the wall. He takes a deep breath,
gets up and sneaks out.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTER, GATED CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

Marcellus is fast asleep on makeshift bed.. A KNOCK at the door,
He wakes up.

MARCELLUS

Come in.

Donidas enters..

MARCELLUS

Donidas, is everything alright?

DONIDAS

I came to request a favor, sir. I would
like to see someone in the village, if
I may. It's important that I do this
now before we leave tomorrow.

MARCELLUS

If I give you a pass, what's stopping
you from deserting?

DONIDAS

There is no glory in it.

MARCELLUS

You do know that Roman Soldiers are patrolling that area.

DONIDAS

I will sneak carefully, sir.

Marcellus ponders the request. He then throws Donidas a key.

MARCELLUS

I trust you.

DONIDAS

I thank you, sir.

Donidas turns to leave...

MARCELLUS

Oh and Donidas.

Donidas stops just before the door...

MARCELLUS

Your true enemy is Caesar. Not Titicus. Please know this.

DONIDAS

If given the chance. I will kill them both.

Donidas exits the ROOM, leaving Marcellus to his thoughts.

EXT. VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

A FAMILIAR SCENE as Justin plays with his wooden sword, swinging it violently, pretending to be in battle.

JUSTIN

You are no match, for I am Justin, the mightiness Gladiator of all.

DONIDAS (O.S.)

Hello, Justin.

Startled, Justin drops his wooden sword and slowly looks up.

JUSTIN

DONIDAS!

He smiles and gives Donidas a great big hug...

IN THE DISTANCE - Someone else is watching.

INT. MARCIA'S CABIN, VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Marcia is sleeping in a bed made of animal fur. She sleeps peacefully, almost like an angel...

JUSTIN (O.S.)

MOTHER!

Marcia SCREAMS, heart pounding out of her chest as she looks at Justin, not knowing whether to choke him to death or laugh.

Justin simply smiles...

JUSTIN

Look who I found.

Marcia looks up and notices Donidas, who looks very amused by her reaction. She calms and looks back at Justin.

MARCIA

Come, I'm taking you to Grandfather's.

JUSTIN

But I want to stay here with you and Donidas.

Justin looks up at Donidas, hoping he can defend him on the issue, but Donidas says nothing, he just smiles and shrugs his shoulders.

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Like a hawk stocking it's prey, Titicus waits, leaned up against the CABIN. His trustee BRUTE, Flaccus is next to him.

They hear the door of the CABIN open, and quickly crouch into the darkness, watching as Marcia walks out with Justin, walking him to another CABIN nearby.

FLACCUS

(Whispering)

He's alone and vulnerable. Should we attack now?

Titicus looks back at Flaccus, a devious smile.

TITICUS

(Whispering)

There's no need for that.

INT. MARCIA'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Donidas notices a Roman sword leaning against the wall. He picks it up, examines it.

MARCIA (O.S.)
It belonged to my husband.

Marcia enters, focusing on the sword.

MARCIA (CONT'D)
He's dead now.

Carefully and respectfully, Donidas places the sword back where he found it.

MARCIA (CONT'D)
Why are you here, Donidas?

DONIDAS
The team is to leave for the dungeons tomorrow.

MARCIA
And when will you return?

DONIDAS
We are to stay in the dungeons until the conclusion of the season.

MARCIA
Then what?

DONIDAS
If we lose during the great tournament, we will all be sent to the quarries with no chance of freedom.

Marcia is speechless, almost unmoved by the news, an awkward silence as they stare at each other.

DONIDAS
I should go.

Donidas heads for the door...

MARCIA
No...

She grabs his hand...

MARCIA
Stay.

DONIDAS
I cannot stay long.

She softly looks into his eyes...

MARCIA

I know...

Donidas knows it's now or never and goes for the gusto, soon their lips lock as they passionately kiss.

INT. ANOTHER CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Blood everywhere, Verus lies dead on the floor.

Justin stands motionless, extreme fear in his eyes. Titicus looks down at him, a devious smile, the SPARTAN SWORD stained with fresh blood.

TITICUS

Tell me, boy. Do you know what glory is?

INT. MARCIA'S CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Marcia wakes up. She notices Donidas standing naked with his back to her. She goes up to him, softly gliding her hand across the "X" scar on the right side of his ribcage.

DONIDAS

This scar is a reminder that I am the spawn of a Spartan Warrior... Sadly, sometimes I have trouble reminding myself.

Donidas takes a deep breath, they stare into each other's eyes.

MARCIA

How do you feel, Donidas? This moment? This time? Standing here with me?

DONIDAS

I feel free.

MARCIA

Then what's stopping you from running away?

EXT. GATED CAMP - DAWN

A HORN sounds off throughout the CAMP. Two WAGONS enter. Several ROMAN SOLDIERS begin escorting MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS out of the TEAM CABIN.

INT. TEAM CABIN, CAMP - CONTINUOUS

As MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS exit the CABIN, Donidas stays put, sitting with a blank stare, in deep thought.

Lucius takes notice...

LUCIUS

We are to go to the dungeons and you
look like you just won your freedom.

A ROMAN SOLDIER enters, realizing that Donidas and Lucius are
the only ones left.

ROMAN SOLDIER #1

You two, Hurry up!

Donidas looks over at Lucius, a faint smile.

DONIDAS

Have faith, my friend. We will have our
freedom soon enough.

EXT. VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The two WAGONS roll out of the GATED CAMP, entering the
seemingly empty VILLAGE...

INT. WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Squeezed in tight, Donidas looks out to the VILLAGE, trying to
catch a glimpse of Marcia... She is nowhere to be found.

PURE SHOCK - Donidas suddenly spots Marcia's CABIN, burnt to the
ground. Her father, Verus hangs dead on a large wooden stake
next to the destruction.

Donidas stares at the horrific scene, a mixture of guilt and
rage pulsating through his veins.

Lucius sits next to him...

LUCIUS

Is everything alright, Donidas?

Donidas takes a moment to contain his rage.

DONIDAS

Whatever happens between now and the
end, you must remain strong. I am
counting on you to help me lead this
team to victory.

(Beat)

Are you ready, Lucius?

LUCIUS

I would follow you to hell and back...

Donidas notices his TEAMMATES in the WAGON staring at him, all nodding their heads in respect.

LUCIUS
We all would.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

MOONLIGHT shines though a barred window, illuminating the damp area. Marcia sits against the wall, holding Justin to her chest.

JUSTIN
I'm scared, Mother.

MARCIA
I know. But, you have to be brave now.

She kisses him on the forehead.

MARCIA
We both have to be brave..

The door suddenly burst open. Two ROMAN GUARDS enter. GUARD #1 grabs Marcia by the hair, pulls her to her feet.

JUSTIN
MOTHER!

Justin tries to rush to Marcia's aid, but ROMAN GUARD #2 quickly grabs him, and holds him back. Marcia manages to glance back at Justin as ROMAN GUARD #1 drags her out of the room.

MARCIA
Be brave, Justin!

INT. BEDROOM, CAESAR'S PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Marcia is shoved into the ROOM, the door slams shut behind her, as she looks forward, seeing Titicus, sitting on the bed, wearing a white robe, drinking a glass of wine.

There's a suspicious but inviting look on his face.

TITICUS
You can sit.

Marcia nervously steps forward and sits at the edge of the bed.

TITICUS (CONT'D)
You mustn't be afraid. I will not harm you.

MARCIA

You... You killed my father.

TITICUS

Your father was a brave man, and he has my respects. I just did what was necessary.

MARCIA

What do you want from us?

Titicus gets out of bed and stands directly in front of her. His robe suddenly drops, exposing his naked body.

TITICUS

Leverage...

Marcia jumps up and rushes for the door, Titicus jumps in her way.

MARCIA

You solve nothing taking my body.

TITICUS

On the contrary, I think this will accomplish a lot more.

Titicus smiles and casually takes sip of wine...

WHAP! - Marcia KICKS him square in the nuts. Wine SPITS out of his mouth as he crumbles to the floor, holding his groin in agonizing pain.

Marcia rushes for the door again. It's LOCKED. Panicked, she looks around, spotting the SPARTAN SWORD. She grabs it and turns back to Titicus, preparing to use it.

TITICUS

YOUR SON WILL ROT IN THAT ROOM IF YOU STRIKE ME DOWN!

Marcia freezes... And as reality sets in, lowers the SPARTAN SWORD. Titicus stands, composes himself and holds out his right hand.

TITICUS

Now be a good girl.

As Marcia slowly hands the SPARTAN SWORD over, she notices something on his body...

MARCIA

That... That mark?

Titicus pauses, this obviously strikes a nerve.

MONTAGE BEGINS:

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - DAY

The GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS are taking a brutal beating at the hands of a vicious GLADIATOR TEAM filled with BARBARIAN.

Donidas, bloody and weak, watches to his dismay, as a TEAMMATE gets knocked into the FIRE POT and sadly burns to death.

Donidas watches again as the CHAINED TIGER mauls another TEAMMATE to death.

SCENE after SCENE, Donidas is receiving multiple big hits from the opposing BARBARIANS.

MONTAGE ENDS:

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar is sitting between two empty seats. Despite his lack of company, he is in fact delighted by the beating Donidas is taking on the ARENA FLOOR.

Brutus enters the area and walks over to Caesar.

BRUTUS

The Army has searched every inch of Rome and its country sides... Still no sign of Octivius... Or Claudia, sir.

Caesar, with no reaction to the news, plays to the CROWD and waves to them, a fake smile on his face.

CAESAR

How long do you think it will take before the people start to notice...?

BRUTUS

It is hard to say. Rumors tend to spread like barbarians.

Caesar takes a deep breath and turns back to the ARENA FLOOR.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Donidas, weary and bloody, runs with the ball...

WHAP! - He's hit by a BARBARIAN and swooped off his feet. He crashes into a large JAGGED ROCK, losing the ball.

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Another BARBARIAN picks it up and runs all the way to the patch of GRASS for the score, placing the ball into the fourth and final CHALICE.

The CROWD'S disappointment is heard throughout the COLISEUM as the team of BARBARIANS celebrates their victory.

Donidas remains on the dirt, wincing in pain as his TEAMMATES are shoved back into the TUNNEL by the ROMAN GUARDS.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

A ROMAN GUARD walks up to Caesar.

GUARD

There's a Colonel Marcellus requesting to speak to you, sir.

CAESAR

Allow him through.

The ROMAN GUARD waves Marcellus though. Marcellus walks up to Caesar and stands at attention.

MARCELLUS

May I speak freely, Caesar?

CAESAR

You may.

MARCELLUS

I heard from one of the dungeon guards that you are only feeding the team every two days. That is not fit, sir.

CAESAR

Their owner, General Octivius is a criminal, so I will treat his team as such.

MARCELLUS

A Criminal? I'm curious, under what charge, sir?

Caesar glances at the VACANT SEAT next to him.

CAESAR

Kidnapping.

Hopeless, Marcellus turns to walk away.

CAESAR

Oh, and Marcellus...

Marcellus stops...

CAESAR

They will all go down with General Octavius' name. Are you sure you want to be on that ship?

MARCELLUS

I believe in fate, sir.

CAESAR

Then you are a fool.

Caesar gives a smug smile as Marcellus exits the area.

INT. DUNGEON, COLISEUM - NIGHT

The area is poorly lit by candle light. A famished Donidas sits on bench, cringing from his cracked ribs as he wraps bandages around his ribcage. After finishing, he takes a deep breath, rests his head on bench, and closes his eyes.

FINALLY, a brief moment of peace...

EXT. VILLAGE CAMP, MACEDONIA - DREAM SEQUENCE - DUSK

Donidas, in full GLADIATOR GEAR, holds the SPARTAN SWORD to Caesar's throat. The gash on Caesar's cheek is fresh as blood streams down from his face.

CAESAR

You can strike me down now and never know the glory your father once had, or you can grow up and live that glory. Glory that will make average men praise you like a God.

Donidas stares into Caesar's eyes, makes his decision, and strikes down with the SPARTAN SWORD...

Caesar suddenly disintegrates into nothingness, as the SPARTAN SWORD sticks to the ground.

Donidas looks around, confused, noticing a CABIN (same from first scene), which catches on fire. The stoic sway of the FLAMES captivates Donidas.

SUDDENLY - A TODDLER'S CRY is heard from inside.

Donidas steps forward, prepared to save it, but a hand grabs him and pulls him back... It's Theonidas.

DONIDAS
Fa... Father?

Theonidas doesn't reply. He just stands firm, emotionless. His face darkened by the grooves of his SPARTAN HELMET. His eyes are demonic, glowing red. He points to the SPARTAN SWORD, which is sticking in the ground.

Donidas grabs the SPARTAN SWORD and pulls it out of the ground. He stares at the "X" symbol on the base of it.

DONIDAS (CONT'D)
Is this what I need, Father?

Theonidas vanishes in thin air. Donidas is left with no answers, he grows angry and throws the SPARTAN SWORD far into the distance.

SUDDENLY - The TODDLER'S CRY is heard again.

Donidas quickly turns to the CABIN, which is burnt to a crisp, nothing's left, but ashes.

LUCIUS (V.O.)
Donidas...

There is no sign of the TODDLER, but eerily...

LUCIUS (V.O.)
Donidas...

We can still hear the CRYING...

LUCIUS (V.O.)
DONIDAS!

DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS:

INT. DUNGEON, COLISEUM - PRESENT - NIGHT

Donidas jumps awake, looking up at an equally famished Lucius.

LUCIUS
You have to come quick... It's Crixus.

Donidas gets up and follows Lucius to another part of the DUNGEON where TEAMMATES are gathered around.

The MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS have depleted in numbers. From thirty strong, to a dwindling eighteen MEN. They are all staring down at Crixus, who is dead.

As Donidas and Lucius make their way over, TEAMMATES look up at Donidas, not pleased at all.

TEAMMATE #1

Crixus died of starvation. How long will it be until the next one of us drops dead?

Donidas is speechless. Lucius steps up.

LUCIUS

He did not die in vain. We will avenge his death by winning our freedom.

TEAMMATE #1

What freedom do you speak of? We are too weak to battle...

TEAMMATE #2

We all will probably be dead by season's end...

DONIDAS

ENOUGH!

They shift their attention to Donidas.

DONIDAS

If you must eat...

He points to Crixus' dead body...

DONIDAS

There is meat lying before of you. If you want to honor the man, then I suggest you all shut up and pay him some respect.

Donidas storms away and sits back on the bench. The MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS are left speechless.

SUDDENLY - The DUNGEON DOOR burst open as several ROMAN GUARDS storm in.

ROMAN GUARD #1

DONIDAS!

Donidas acknowledges GUARDS and slowly rises from the bench...

ROMAN GUARD #1

You have been summoned.

INT. SMALL ROOM, DUNGEON - MOMENTS LATER

Donidas is shoved into the dense room, shackled by his hands and feet. The door SLAMS behind him.

He composes himself and looks forward, seeing a smiling Titicus, holding the SPARTAN SWORD.

DONIDAS

The boy and his Mother, where are they?

TITICUS

Why are they of importance to you?

DONIDAS

WHERE ARE THEY?!

Titicus suddenly lifts the SPARTAN SWORD to Donidas' throat, only Donidas doesn't flinch, not an inch. He shows the same stern demeanor as when he faced the lion on the arena floor.

TITICUS

Do you know why they keep you in a cage, slave...? Because true human nature is weak, compassionate, the people love you and don't even know why. That woman and child have made you human and it will be your downfall.

DONIDAS

What do you know of love?

Titicus smirks at the idea, ignores the question.

TITICUS

Do you fear death, Donidas?

DONIDAS

I'm starving... I'm tired... I do not have the energy to fear death.

TITICUS

Good, then I have a proposition.

Titicus lowers the SPARTAN SWORD..

TITICUS

Caesar does'nt want your team to make it to Championship Battle. That why he is weakening you before the great tournament.

(Beat)

The truth is, the people of Rome love you...

DONIDAS

Get to the proposition.

TITICUS

I need Team Octivius to make it to the Championship... So I can take your soul.

Titicus' eyes turn ice cold as he stares into Donidas' eyes.

TITICUS

You will face me in a fight challenge during the battle, only we will not fight. You are to fall to your knees, and beg for my mercy... Not Caesar's.

Donidas turns away...

TITICUS

After the people watch you cower before me, I will end your life, and the boy will be set free... A name for a life.

DONIDAS

What about the woman?

TITICUS

The Mother?

(Smiling)

She already submitted to my bed.

Donidas' face turns red, eyes bulging...

TITICUS

So, I might keep her.

ROAR! - Donidas lunges at Titicus like an animal, but is caught by the shackles.

DONIDAS

ROMAN DOG! YOU HAVE NO HONOR!

Titicus is pleasingly amused by this temper tantrum.

TITICUS

If your team does not make it to the Championship Battle. If you do not honor my request. Then I will see to it that the boy and his mother be placed in the center of the Arena Floor, where they'll be fed to the lions.

Donidas calms, a hint of submission in his eyes.

DONIDAS

How... how can I trust you will set them free?

TITICUS

You are not in the position distrust me, Donidas.

DONIDAS

Then my men need food and water.

Titicus doesn't reply, he just smiles and walks out of the room.

INT. DUNGEON, COLISEUM - MOMENTS LATER

Donidas lies on the bench staring up at ceiling, truly disheartened. MEMBERS of TEAM OCTIVIUS mope around. They are all depressed, hungry, and weak.

TEAMMATE #1 is sitting on the ground, sharpening a wooden stick. TEAMMATE #2 takes notice.

TEAMMATE #2

What are you doing?

TEAMMATE #1

Mind your business.

BANG! BANG! BANG! - Everyone's attention turns to the DUNGEON DOOR.

GUARD (O.S.)

(Outside the door)

FOOD'S HERE!

A single loaf of bread comes through the slot of the door.

SUDDENLY - A feeding frenzy ensues, as TEAMMATES rush to the bread. TEAMMATE #1 snatches it, threatening with the spike.

As the chaos escalates, Lucius rushes over to Donidas, still on the bench.

LUCIUS
Are you going to do something about
this?

Donidas slowly looks over. Lucius can sense his lack of urgency and rushes back to the uproar.

TEAMMATE #1 lunges with sharp stick as he holds the bread..

TEAMMATE #1
GET BACK! I WILL KILL ANYONE WHO COMES
CLOSER!

Other TEAMMATES keep their distances, trying to find an opening to rush him.

TEAMMATE #2
Come on! He cannot kill us all.

Lucius rushes in and punches TEAMMATE #1, knocking him to the ground. TEAMMATES get riled up as Lucius gets on top of TEAMMATE #1, punching him repeatedly.

DONIDAS (O.S.)
STOP!

EVERYONE STOPS. They shift their attention to Donidas, who walks over. He picks up the bread, takes it to the dungeon door and throws it back through the slot.. SHOCKING EVERYONE.

LUCIUS
What are you doing, Donidas?

Donidas slowly turns to his TEAMMATES, takes a deep breath.

DONIDAS
I am tired, I am weak, and I am hungry,
but even I can see what Caesar is doing
to us. He's breaking us apart. Do you
know our freedom's at stake here?

His TEAMMATES are speechless as Donidas walks back to bench and lies down.

INT. DUNGEON, COLISEUM - MOMENTS LATER

The atmosphere is finally calm. Donidas sleeps on bench.

LUCIUS (O.S.)
Donidas...

Donidas open his eyes, his TEAMMATES in front of him, he jumps up, ready to fight.

DONIDAS
What is it?

TEAMMATE #1 steps forward.

TEAMMATE #1
We want to follow you, Donidas. We just
don't know what to do.

Donidas softens, there's a pleading look in his TEAMMATES faces...

DONIDAS
I... I...

But he's speechless...

SUDDENLY - the SLOT on dungeon door opens and several loafs of
bread are pushed through.

TEAM OCTIVIUS can't believe their eyes. Donidas cautiously walks
over and peaks through the slot.

OTHER SIDE OF DOOR - Titicus holding an empty sack, acknowledges
Donidas...

TITICUS
You have your food. Now honor my
request.

Donidas steps back from the dungeon door. He takes a deep breath
and turns to his TEAMMATES.

DONIDAS
I need all of you to be ready.

They all nod in respect, new hope illuminating in their eyes.

INT. TUNNEL, COLISEUM - DAY

IT'S TIME FOR BATTLE - As CROWD NOISE echoes through the TUNNEL.

Donidas, in full GLADIATOR GEAR, holds his fist in the air. The
remaining GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS are standing behind him.

DONIDAS
FOLLOW ME TO HELL, MEN!

They all CHEER, running out of the TUNNEL...

MONTAGE BEGINS:**EXT. ARENA FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER**

SUPERIMPOSITION:

THE GREAT TOURNAMENT - 1st ROUND

Donidas is back to his old form, dominating the opposing GLADIATOR TEAM.

Donidas dives with the ball, over a pile of GLADIATORS, falling onto the patch of GRASS for the score. He runs to the fourth and final CHALICE, and places the BALL in it. The CROWD CHEERS as TEAM OCTIVIUS celebrates their victory.

INT. DUNGEON, COLISEUM - NIGHT

Donidas sits on the bench, cringing in pain as he wraps a bandage around his ribcage.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR, COLISEUM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSITION:

THE GREAT TOURNAMENT - SEMI-FINALS

THE LIONS OF OCTIVIUS ARE BATTLING THE COBRAS OF CORNELIUS.

A FIGHT CHALLENGE - The opposing GLADIATOR falls to his knees. Caesar gives the THUMBS DOWN. Donidas quickly slits the opposing GLADIATOR'S throat, an unmoved expression on his face as blood flies onto his helmet.

Donidas breaks a couple tackles and runs in for the SCORE. He gives the ball to TEAMMATE #1, who gracefully walks over to the fourth and final CHALICE and places it in... CROWD GOES WILD!

EXT. VIP SECTION - CONTINUOUS

General Cornelius, disgusted by his team's defeat, quickly walks away with his entourage.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION - CONTINUOUS

Caesar's leans back in his seat, arms folded, very pissed off. He looks over at Brutus, who shrugs his shoulders...

MONTAGE ENDS:

EXT. TOWN CENTER, ROME - DAY

The ANNOUNCER stands on a platform, looking down at the anticipating CROWD in front of it.

ANNOUNCER

The moment you all have been waiting
for... The battle for ultimate glory!

Two ASSISTANTS open the curtains behind the ANNOUNCER, presenting... Titicus and Donidas, facing each other in full GEAR, helmet at their sides.

ANNOUNCER

Will it be the Lions of Octivius, led
by their heroic gladiator, Donidas?

Donidas' eyes are dark and weary...

ANNOUNCER

Or will Titicus prevail and lead the
Roman Army to victory yet again?

(Beat)

Be there on the Ides of March to
witness greatness firsthand!

The ANNOUNCER looks over at Titicus and Donidas..

ANNOUNCER

Come now. Let the two heroes shake
hands.

Titicus steps up to Donidas, holds out his hand.

TITICUS

Remember the deal, slave.

Donidas reluctantly shakes hands... The CROWD cheers.

DONIDAS

I'm prepared to fall... But, I'm going to
take a piece of you with me.

Titicus senses something unusual in Donidas' cold dark stare,
something that makes him feel very uneasy...

INT. BEDROOM, CAESAR'S PALACE - NIGHT

Titicus is alone, sitting at the edge of his bed, staring at the SPARTAN SWORD in his hands.

Caesar enters the room...

CAESAR

Well this is a rare sight. The great Titicus, all alone? You usually have about four to ten women in here before battle.

Titicus doesn't break focus. He continues to stare at the SPARTAN SWORD, focusing on the "X."

TITICUS

You have given me everything... The riches, the prestige, the glory, all the things a man could ever wish for in a lifetime...

He slowly looks up at Caesar...

TITICUS

Yet, I never told you how much I actually hate you.

Caesar's silent, the words actually hurtful.

CAESAR

Well at least you know who gave you everything.

Caesar storms out, SLAMMING the door in the process. This doesn't faze Titicus one bit, he goes back to staring at the SPARTAN SWORD.

INT. DARK CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Marcia sits against the wall, holding Justin's head to her chest.

JUSTIN

I'm hungry.

MARCIA

I know... I know... We will be out soon, I promise.

She pets Justin's hair, trying to comfort him as much as a mother can in this dire situation.

JUSTIN

Will Donidas save us?

TITICUS (O.S.)

No, Boy...

Titicus kneels down to Marcia and Justin, and holds out a loaf of bread. Justin reluctantly accepts it and takes a bite.

TITICUS
Donidas will die tomorrow.

Justin stops chewing, his little heart ripped out his chest.

TITICUS
Once he falls, you and your mother will
be set free.

Titicus looks up at Marcia, pure hatred in her eyes.

MARCIA
You're a monster.

TITICUS
The world is full of monsters. I just
do what's necessary to keep my
legendary status relevant.

Titicus stands and begins towards the door.

MARCIA
And what of your scar?

He stops...

MARCIA
Why are you so afraid to venture for
answers?

Titicus slowly turns back at her, an odd sense of sincerity.

TITICUS
I sold my soul long ago, so even if I
were to know the truth, I am much too
deep to back away now. I am a slave to
my own vanity, and fate must run its
course.

EXT. THE STREETS OF ROME - DAY

SUPERIMPOSITION:

THE CHAMPIONSHIP BATTLE, "IDES OF MARCH"

A VIBRANT ATMOSPHERE. Tons of pre-match festivities. CITIZENS parade through the streets. ROMAN ARMY TENTS are everywhere, recruiting young fit ROMAN MEN.

INT. LUXURY ROOM, COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

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Caesar sits in his THRONE, paranoid, as he glances over at a group of POLITICIANS, occasionally catching some of them whispering in each other's ears.

His paranoia alarms Brutus...

BRUTUS

Are you alright, sir?

Caesar leans back seat and takes a deep breath.

CAESAR

Once we celebrate another victory on the arena floor, Rome will begin its journey to complete domination of what we know of this world... I can't help but to be a little anxious.

INT. GLADIATOR DUNGEON, COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

The ENERGY is intense as sixteen GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS gear up.

Donidas sits on the bench, cringing in pain as he wraps a bandage around his ribcage. He stops, decides he doesn't need it, unwraps the bandage and throws it away.

He glances at the "X" scar on right side of his ribcage and glides his hands over it, takes a deep breath.

INT. ROMAN ARMY DUNGEON, COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

This SECTION is more luxurious as the ROMAN ARMY TEAM gear up.

Titicus, in full ARMY GEAR, turns to the SPARTAN SWORD leaning against the wall. He grabs it, takes a deep breath, and focuses on the "X" symbol.

INT. DARK CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Marcia looks out the barred window. She can see the COLISEUM far in the distance. She hears the celebrations around it.

JUSTIN (O.S.)

Is Donidas really going to die?

MARCIA

You must have faith, Justin.

She steps away from the window and starts pulling on random cobblestones in the cellar walls.

JUSTIN

What are you doing?

She finds a loose cobblestone and wiggles it...

SUCCESS! - She yanks the piece of cobblestone from the wall.

MARCIA

Justin, I need you to play dead for me.

He quickly complies, dropping to the floor, playing dead.

JUSTIN

Like this?

MARCIA

Now keep your eyes closed. Mother is going to scream really loud, and I need you to stay perfectly still, no matter what. Do you understand?

JUSTIN

Yes, Mother.

Marcia takes a deep breath and SCREAMS at the top of her lungs. It doesn't take long before the cellar door opens with a ROMAN GUARD rushing in.

GUARD

What is it?

Marcia quickly points to Justin on the floor as she hides the cobblestone behind her back.

MARCIA

MY SON! HE'S NOT MOVING!

The GUARD casually walks over to get a closer look at Justin.

WHAP! - Marcia decks him in the face with the cobblestone, knocking him out instantly.

INT. TUNNEL, COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

An eerie calm of silence blows through the tunnel as Donidas looks out to the ARENA FLOOR... Lucius stands next to him.

LUCIUS

Are you ready to lead us to victory?

DONIDAS

What if you are the one who is to lead us to victory and not I? Have you thought about that, my friend?

Lucius ponders the idea as Donidas turns around to his TEAMMATES behind him.

DONIDAS
Remember Crixus' voice. Remember
Barco's voice. I want you all to hear
their voices now, for, we are done
speaking.

The calm before battle abruptly fades away and replaced with
CHEERING from the CROWD outside.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
...TEAM OCTIVIUS!

Donidas raises his fist as he turns towards the ARENA FLOOR.

DONIDAS
We will speak through our actions!

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The CROWD CHEERS as TEAM OCTIVIUS rushes out of the tunnel and
goes to their respective SIDELINE.

AT THE CENTER - the ANNOUNCER plays to CROWD for a moment as
TEAM OCTIVIUS settles in.

ANNOUNCER
AND NOW... JULIUS CAESAR'S ROMAN ARMY
TEAM!

INTRODUCTORY HORNS drown out sounds of the CROWD'S BOOS as
Titicus, Flaccus and the ROMAN ARMY TEAM run out to their
respective sidelines.

Donidas and Titicus catch eyes from across the FIELD.. IT'S ON!!!

MONTAGE BEGINS:

EXT. ARENA FLOOR

The ARMY RUNNER wins the CHARGE and tosses the ball backwards to
Titicus... Both TEAMS CLASH...

Titicus runs with the ball. He lowers his shoulders and plows
through two GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS. One crashes into a FIRE
POT and burns to death.

Titicus trucks Donidas into the dirt, before tossing the ball to
Flaccus, who runs in for the SCORE. A mixture of "BOOS" and
"CHEERS" as Flaccus places the ball in the first SILVER CHALICE.

Donidas runs with the ball, dodging SOLDIERS of the ARMY TEAM.
Titicus takes an angle and decks Donidas from the side. Donidas
crashes to the dirt, losing the ball..

A TEAMMATE scoops the ball up and tosses it back and forth with other TEAMMATES, before tossing it back to Donidas...

Donidas runs with the ball again. He hurdles over Titicus and runs in for the SCORE. The CROWD CHEERS as Donidas places the ball in the first BRONZE CHALICE.

TEAM OCTIVIUS and ROMAN ARMY TEAM are locked in a gruesome match, with the momentum swinging back and forth. Both Donidas and Titicus are bloody and exhausted.

Titicus trucks his way in for the SCORE, filling the second SILVER CHALICE.

Donidas returns the favor, passing the ball to Lucius, who catches it for the SCORE, filling second BRONZE CHALICE.

Titicus dives with the ball towards the SCORING AREA. Donidas collides with him in mid-air. Titicus maneuvers his body on the way down and falls onto the patch of GRASS for the score. He places the BALL in the third SILVER CHALICE.

Lucius is running with the ball. Flaccus gets BIG HIT on Lucius, causing him to drop the ball. A GLADIATOR of TEAM OCTIVIUS scoops the ball up and quickly tosses it backwards to Donidas who runs in for the SCORE, placing it in the third BRONZE CHALICE.

IT'S 3 SILVER CHALICES TO 3 BRONZE CHALICES...

MONTAGE ENDS:

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The ball is at the CENTERLINE, set for the CHARGE. Donidas, battered and bruised, leans into huddle...

DONIDAS

Every ounce of strength has to show
right now. If not, all will be lost.

He glances at his six TEAMMATES in the HUDDLE. They are all bloody, beaten, and worn, some looking near death.

TITICUS (O.S.)

FIGHT CHALLENGE!

The CROWD GASP... Donidas looks up from the huddle, seeing the ANNOUNCER rushing over to Titicus.

ANNOUNCER

And who will you challenge?

TITICUS

Donidas.

The ANNOUNCER slowly looks over at Donidas as if the death warrant has already been signed, then looks up at the CROWD.

ANNOUNCER

WE HAVE A FIGHT CHALLENGE!

The CROWD CHEERS... Donidas turns back to his worried TEAMMATES. He takes a deep breath and looks at Lucius.

DONIDAS

If the worst should happen, I trust you will lead them.

Lucius nods his head, accepting the role.

EXT. STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar, nervous as hell, puts his hands over his face.

BRUTUS

Well, this should be quite a show.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Donidas and Titicus go to their respective sidelines to grab their weapons.

Lucius walks over to Donidas as he picks up a sword.

LUCIUS

Fight well, my friend.

Donidas slowly turns to Lucius.

DONIDAS

There are things beyond my control. Things your eyes will not understand when you see.

LUCIUS

What do you mean?

DONIDAS

I must fall, Lucius. But when I do, hope is still not lost. You can still lead the team to victory. You can still be free.

Lucius is left speechless as Donidas walks away to meet Titicus at the CENTERLINE.

Titicus brandishes the SPARTAN SWORD.

TITICUS

Do you know why we live for the Arena,
Donidas?

Titicus closes his eyes and embraces the NOISE of the CROWD.

TITICUS

Hearing your own name... Hearing the
cheers... Makes us feel as powerful as
the Gods.

He opens his eyes...

TITICUS

It's a shame this will be our first and
only time we get to share this moment
together.
(Beat)
Are you ready, Donidas?

Donidas drops his sword and kneels down...

The CROWD suddenly goes silent. They're confused. Statements like "WHAT IS HE DOING?" and "BOOS" start circulating...

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar stands up, alarmed as well...

CAESAR

What the hell is going on? What is he
doing?

BRUTUS

It may seem that he is surrendering to
Titicus, sir.

CAESAR

It cannot be. They must fight. Donidas
must be at my mercy.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The BOOING continues as Titicus, extremely satisfied, stares down at the submitted Donidas.

TITICUS

And that is how you take someone's name.

Titicus raises the SPARTAN SWORD, preparing for the final blow.

VOICE (O.S.)

Donidas...

A FAINT VOICE is heard through the echoes of BOO'S. Donidas lifts his head slightly...

VOICE (O.S.)

Donidas!

He hears it again... LOUDER, CLEARER. The CROWD also takes notice and the BOOING subsides.

MARCIA (O.S.)

DONIDAS!

THRASH! - The SPARTAN SWORD comes crashing down...

SMASHING into the dirt as Donidas rolls out of the way, picking up his sword in the process.

Donidas looks up towards the TERRACE, spotting Marcia and Justin in the CROWD.

MARCIA

HE HAS THE...

The CROWD CHEERS, drowning out Marcia's voice...

CROWD

DONIDAS! DONIDAS! DONIDAS!

Marcia tries to yell over CROWD...

MARCIA

HE HAS THE MARK OF...

Donidas can't make out what she's saying...

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar notices Marcia yelling from the CITIZEN SECTION.

CAESAR

What's that woman saying?

BRUTUS

(Unsure)

He has the mark of your father...? I
don't know what she means by that, sir.

A revelation hits Caesar like a ton of bricks as he stares down
at the ARENA FLOOR.

CAESAR

It can't be...

He quickly looks over at three GUARDS, standing a couple feet
away from Marcia.

CAESAR

GUARDS! SEIZE THAT WOMAN!

Caesar points to her. The GUARDS quickly acknowledge the order..

BRUTUS

May I ask why, sir?

CAESAR

She obviously knows something, and I
attend to find out how.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Donidas notices the three GUARDS moving in on Marcia and Justin.

DONIDAS

BEHIND YOU, MARCIA!

This time, Marcia can't make out the words, but it's too late,
the GUARDS nab her and Justin and begin dragging them away.

DONIDAS

NO!

Donidas moves forward. Titicus steps in front of him. The CROWD
suddenly goes silent as the STANDOFF between the two icons
commences.

DONIDAS

I do not plan to die anymore, Titicus.
So back away now or meet the edge of my
sword.

TITICUS

Even in your rage, you cannot change
your fate, Donidas. You will die today.

Donidas ATTACKS. Titicus easily defends with the SPARTAN SWORD.

Titicus sees an opening and COUNTERATTACKS. The SPARTAN SWORD is far superior then the other sword as Donidas is driven back..

ROAR! - The CHAINED TIGER suddenly pounces, clawing Donidas, creating a DEEP GASH in his arm. Dondias quickly rolls out of the TIGER'S proximity, staggering back to his feet.

Titicus swings the SPARTAN SWORD and knocks the sword out of Donidas' hand. Titicus swings again, this time, Donidas ducks and tackles him to the dirt. The SPARTAN SWORD drops in the process.

They scuffle, punching each other back and forth. Titicus kicks Donidas off and quickly back crawls to the SPARTAN SWORD. Donidas grabs his sword as well and stands to face Titicus.

TITICUS

Is that all you got, slave?

THEY CLASH AGAIN..

Titicus charges at Donidas, driving him back - SLAM! - Right into a large JAGGED ROCK. Donidas takes a hard bounce, and quickly regaining his composure.

THEY CLASH AGAIN..

Donidas swings his sword wildly. Titicus easily defends it, sees an opening and swings the SPARTAN SWORD..

SMASH! - The SPARTAN SWORD slams across Donidas' HELMET, knocking it off as he crashes to the dirt.. The CROWD GASPS.

Titicus watches in amusement as Donidas struggles to get up.

TITICUS

Get up, Donidas!

DONIDAS POV - Blurry vision slowly clearing.

TITICUS

Surely you can give me a better fight then this.

Donidas stands straight up, composes himself and stares directly at Titicus, pure hatred in his eyes.

DONIDAS

You have me wrong, Titicus.

Donidas takes off his body armor and throws it to the ground, leaving his scarred body exposed.

DONIDAS

I do not need protection to defeat you.
I believe in destiny, and I will kill
you right where you stand.

Donidas picks up his sword..

DONIDAS

I didn't make it this far to fail.

Donidas raises the sword with his right hand and charges..

Titicus braces with the SPARTAN SWORD..

SUDDENLY - Titicus' eyes open wide SHOCKED when he notices the
"X" scar on Donidas' ribcage.

TITICUS

Wait...

Donidas crashes down, Titicus mistakenly leaves enough room for
the blade to penetrate through - BLOOD SPLATTERS!

EXT. STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar stands in shock as Titicus fall to his knees on the ARENA
FLOOR.

CAESAR

No...

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Titicus frantically grabs his neck as BLOOD gushes out, helmet
falling off in the process, his other hand still clinching the
SPARTAN SWORD.

There's a sincere look as Titicus stares up at Donidas.

TITICUS

I didn't want to believe... because I was
afraid...
(Coughing blood)
Afraid of the truth...

He holds up the SPARTAN SWORD. It shakes in his dying hands.

TITICUS

Afraid of who I really was... Of who you
really are...

He drops the SPARTAN SWORD and falls dead to the dirt.

EXT. STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

An uneasy silence fills the air as shock overwhelms the CROWD.

They all share the look of disbelief. The man they once cherished as a "living legend" then loathed as a "villain" is now dead.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Donidas drops his sword, walks over to the SPARTAN SWORD and picks it up, finally in his hands...

CAESAR (O.S.)
GUARDS, SEIZE HIM!

SUDDENLY - Six ROMAN GUARDS rush over and surround him.

Donidas has no fight left in the tank. He drops the SPARTAN SWORD and surrenders as the GUARDS throw him down and restrain him... The CROWD bursts in protest.

EXT. CAESAR'S SECTION, STADIUM TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

The PROTEST escalates as the CROWD starts throwing trash, food, and other foreign objects towards Caesar's direction.

CAESAR
Unless you want to get stuck in the
riot, Brutus, I suggest you follow me.

Caesar motions four GUARDS over, who quickly rush over and escort Caesar and Brutus out of area.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The BOOING continues as the six GUARDS drag Donidas towards the TUNNEL. Donidas glances over at Lucius, on the TEAM'S SIDELINE.

DONIDAS
Remember what I said, Lucius. You are
the one who will lead them to victory...
IT'S YOUR DESTINY!

Lucius nods in respect as Donidas disappears inside the TUNNEL.

INT. PRISON SECTION, DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

The GUARDS throw Donidas into a HOLDING CELL then quickly exit the area. Donidas takes a deep depressing breath as he sits on a nearby bench, feeling the RUMBLES of the rowdy CROWD vibrate through the walls...

DONIDAS
 May the Gods be with you, Lucius.

EXT. ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Lucius leans into the huddle where six other TEAMMATES nervously await his orders... IT COMES DOWN TO THIS SCORE...

LUCIUS
 It comes down to this. We have to shock
 Rome this day. We have to win our
 freedom... READY!

TEAMMATES
 (Chanting)
 WE ARE READY!

The six TEAMMATES set up behind Lucius as he steps up to the line drawn a couple meters from the SCORING AREA.

He takes a deep breath and sets in his running stance. The opposing ARMY RUNNER sets up on the opposite end.

THE HORNS SOUNDS OFF - THE CHARGE IS ON - They both dart for the ball on the CENTERLINE...

It's a close race. Lucius and the ARMY RUNNER are evenly matched, getting closer and closer to the ball.

SLOW MOTION - As the ARMY RUNNER dives for it, his hands inches from the ball...

SWOOP! - Lucius quickly scoops it up and jumps as the ARMY RUNNER slides clear under his legs.

Lucius lands on his feet and runs for it...

The six other ARMY TEAMMATES are caught off guard as Lucius runs deep inside their territory.

Flaccus spears towards him. Lucius suddenly STOPS. Flaccus flies right past him and into the SPIKE PIT.

Lucius continues and runs all the way to the ROMAN ARMY'S patch of GRASS, in for the score... The CROWD goes silent, shocked.

Lucius catches his breath as he turns around, looking out to the obstacle riddled dirt field. The GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS are speechless.

Lucius takes the ball to the fourth and final BRONZE CHALICE, and places it in... The CROWD CHEERS throughout COLIESUM.

THE HORNS SOUND OFF - THE LIONS OF OCTIVIUS ARE VICTORIOUS!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COLISEUM - DUSK

A CHEERING CROWD watches as the eleven surviving GLADIATORS of TEAM OCTIVIUS gracefully pile into a WAGON.

Marcellus stands a couple meters away, overseeing the process.

LUCIUS (O.S.)
What now, sir?

Marcellus looks over at Lucius...

MARCELLUS
The wagon will take you to a luxurious building where you will have time to relax. Tomorrow, there will be a ceremony in the team's honor, during which at the conclusion, you will all be granted Roman citizenship and set free.

LUCIUS
What do we do after that?

MARCELLUS
You will have to choose your own path.

Lucius takes a moment to ponder the idea.

LUCIUS
And what about Donidas, sir?

MARCELLUS
His fate is up to the Gods now.

INT. PRISON SECTION, DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

In the HOLDING CELL, Donidas still sits on the bench, in a defeated manner.

OCTIVIUS (O.S.)
Lift your head up, Donidas. Your teammates have won their freedom, and now it's time for you to fulfill your destiny.

Donidas looks up, seeing Octivius, standing outside the HOLDING CELL, holding up a key.

INT. WALKWAY, DUNGEON - MOMENTS LATER

Donidas cautiously follows Octivius as they walk down the walkway. Octivius suddenly stops and opens a door leading into a SMALL ROOM, inviting Donidas inside...

INT. SMALL ROOM, DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

Donidas walks in. He notices a body fully covered by a cloth on a table.

DONIDAS

What is this?

Octivius walks over to the table and lifts the covers, presenting the dead body of Titicus.

OCTIVIUS

Look closely Donidas.

Donidas analyzes the body. He notices a scar blocked by Titicus' right arm and slowly lifts the arm...

TOTAL SHOCK! - As Donidas stares directly at an "X" scar etched into Titicus' ribcage.

INT. CABIN - FLASHBACK - DUSK

A BOY TODDLER (2) is crying frantically, sitting alone in Theonidas' cabin.

A younger Caesar cautiously walks in, blood dripping from his face where little Donidas sliced him with the SPARTAN SWORD.

The TODDLER, eyes in awe, stops crying, calmly stands and walks over to Caesar.

Caesar notices an "X" scratched into the TODDLER'S skin, still bleeding, still fresh. He kneels down, looks into the TODDLER'S eyes... And smiles.

INT. SMALL ROOM, DUNGEON - PRESENT - NIGHT

Donidas, overwhelmed with grief, falls to his knees.

DONIDAS

You knew... This entire time... You knew he was my brother.

OCTIVIUS

Titicus was tainted by the greed and glory. Your thirst for revenge was too pure. The knowledge of your brother's survival would have threatened the mission.

Octavius grabs the SPARTAN SWORD...

OCTIVIUS

It's time for Rome to have a new leader, and that leader is me.

DONIDAS

What makes you so different?

OCTIVIUS

I guess we will have to wait and see.

He hands the SPARTAN SWORD over to Donidas...

OCTIVIUS

But if you want to live a free fulfilled life...

Octavius holds up a bag and pulls out the GOLDEN HELMET which belonged to Theonidas.

OCTIVIUS

You know what has to be done...

Donidas stares at the GOLDEN HELMET, intense rage burning in his eyes.

OCTIVIUS

For you are truly the ghost of your father.

INT. BALL ROOM, CAESAR'S PALACE - NIGHT

Caesar sits in his THRONE, depressed, alone with Brutus. The entrance doors open as two GUARDS escort Marcia and Justin into the area.

Caesar stares down at Marcia...

CAESAR

You were yelling something today, something regarding a mark. I need to know what you know about it.

She doesn't answer...

Enraged, Caesar storms over and SMACKS her in the face, she falls to her knees.

CAESAR
I ASK YOU A QUESTION!

Marcia slowly looks up, stubborn, still no answer.

Caesar suddenly pulls out a dagger, grabs Justin and holds it to his throat.

CAESAR
You will tell me what you know about
Donidas or I will smear this boy's
blood all over this floor!

SUDDENLY - MEN are heard SCREAMING outside the room..

INT. HALLWAY, CAESAR'S PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Wearing the GOLDEN HELMET and holding the SPARTAN SWORD, Donidas storms through the hallway. His demeanor resembles someone possessed as several GUARDS lay dead in his path.

More GUARDS enter the area and ATTACK..

BLOOD SPLATTERS EVERYWHERE as Donidas slices through all of them, continuing his warpath.

INT. BALL ROOM, CAESAR'S PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Caesar, still holding Justin at knifepoint, looks over at the two GUARDS..

CAESAR
Whatever it takes, you will honor Rome
by defending me at all cost!

The GUARDS nervously approach the doorway as more SCREAMS are heard from outside.

SWOOM! - A SPEAR goes through GUARD #1's neck, killing him instantly.

SUDDENLY - Donidas rushes in, swings the SPARTAN SWORD and decapitates GUARD #2.

Donidas then shifts his attention to Caesar, trembling as he holds Justin.

DONIDAS
Does that child remind you of anyone?

Caesar releases Justin, drops dagger and frantically backs away. He trips over his own feet and falls as Donidas approaches, lifting the SPARTAN SWORD...

CAESAR

WAIT!

Caesar goes to his knees, holding up his hands...

CAESAR

Please! I've granted you mercy before in the arena. Please! I beg you! Have mercy on me.

DONIDAS

The mark on my body is a reminder of who I really am. You denied my brother of his.

Donidas lowers the SPARTAN SWORD, placing the point along the scar on Caesar's face...

DONIDAS

The mark on your face should have reminded you that the child, who gave it to you, would one day stare into your eyes again...

(Beat)

I have dreamt of this moment.

Donidas lifts the SPARTAN SWORD and prepares for the final act of redemption... Caesar cowers before him.

OCTIVIUS (O.S.)

STOP!

Donidas pauses and takes a couple steps back. Caesar looks over at Octavius, standing in doorway.

CAESAR

You...

Octavius gives Caesar a rivaling smile as he struts over to the THRONE. A terrified Brutus backs away from it.

CAESAR

What makes you think they will let you be my successor?

Octavius sits in the THRONE, gets comfortable, and stares down at Caesar.

OCTIVIUS

Your position was granted by the republic to protect Rome from its enemy. It was based on military construct, which states if you shall die, the highest military ranked General will succeed your position. Since you did not return that power to the Senate, that rule still applies.

Caesar stands with his chest out, trying to retain any dignity he has left.

CAESAR

What makes you think you can be me?

OCTIVIUS

The people of Rome have spoken, and the Senate grows tired of your ways. You and I both know how people can be swayed, and the arena has proved that concept.

He looks over at Brutus, cowering in a corner.

OCTIVIUS

Brutus will tell everyone that you, Julius Caesar, were an honorable man. I will then follow with a speech about Rome's future.

Octavius gets up from the THRONE and walks over to Brutus.

OCTIVIUS

Out of all the great minds of Rome, I would think you know what has to be done here.

Octavius holds out his hand..

OCTIVIUS

Come, Brutus, be the first to bow to the future Emperor of Rome and I will grant you clemency.

Caesar stares in disbelief as his assistant, Brutus bows down and kisses the hand of his enemy.

CAESAR

ENOUGH! I AM TRUE LEADER OF ROME! I AM THE CHOSEN ONE!

Octavius spreads his arms in a victorious manner as he turns back to Caesar.

OCTIVIUS

I win.

Caesar collapses to his knees, staring down at the floor. The end is near.

CAESAR

You have truly taken everything from me.

Octavius sits back down in the THRONE, smiling with delight.

OCTIVIUS

Time to fulfill your destiny, Donidas.

Donidas looks over at Marcia, holding Justin in her arms.

DONIDAS

Everything this man has taken from me will be vindicated and I will be able to move forward from this.

Marcia nods her head, covers Justin's eyes and closes hers.

Donidas stares back down at Caesar, lifting the SPARTAN SWORD once again...

DONIDAS

My Mother... My Father... My Brother...
(Beat)
My Family.

SLASH! - The SPARTAN SWORD crashes down on Caesar.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. ROMAN COUNCIL ASSEMBLY, SENATE BUILDING - DAY

Brutus, thankful to be alive, is giving a speech on the center platform as MEMBERS of the SENATE watch. Several MILITARY OFFICERS are also in attendance.

BRUTUS

...And he was an honorable man. But as I mourn a friend's death, I will also embrace the life of Rome. For, I am grateful and bless by the Gods to be a part of this great republic, and I am glad you have all considered a new leader in the wake of Julius Caesar untimely death. A man who the people of Rome have spoken for and know very well... AUGUSTUS OCTIVIUS!

EVERYONE stands and applauds as Octavius makes a dramatic entrance, walking slowly down the aisle with Claudia at his side.

He glances over and spots Marcellus, standing amongst the crowd of MILITARY OFFICERS. They make eye contact, and nod to each other... Success!

EXT. OUTSIDE VILLAGE - DAY

Lucius is on a horse, looking down at Donidas. Both in normal villager attire.

DONIDAS

So they are sending you to Egypt?

LUCIUS

We will battle in other arenas, in front of many crowds, across many lands. This time as free men.

DONIDAS

Sounds like a great adventure.

LUCIUS

Why did you decline to join us?

Donidas glances back at the VILLAGE where Marcia hugs Justin compassionately.

DONIDAS

Have you ever wanted to raise a family, Lucius?

LUCIUS

I have been a slave my whole life, I know nothing of it.

DONIDAS

Raising a family could be the greatest thing I ever get to do in this lifetime.

He looks back at Lucius.

DONIDAS

Be well, my friend. May all the glory be yours.

They shake hands...

LUCIUS

I will never forget you.

DONIDAS

You are my brother, Lucius.

Lucius gallops away, disappearing in the horizon as Donidas embraces this peaceful moment and lets out a sigh of relief.

He glances back at Marcia and Justin once again...

And simply smiles.

END CREDITS: