

GLADIATOR DAYS

written by

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. HILLY PLAIN - DAY**

**CAPTION: Thrace, 73 BC**

Wide shot of a rolling plain. Here and there, rocks jut out through the grass. A ROMAN FORTRESS is in the background at the extreme left. Equally far in the distance, a small band of about thirty soldiers charge into the shot from the right. Their battle cries are barely audible.

Cut to a full shot of the soldiers, suddenly at full volume. Their LEADER raises his sword over his head.

**EXT. FORTRESS GATE - CONTINUOUS**

Two GUARDS stand in front of the closed gate of the fortress. The attackers' voices are quiet again. The FIRST GUARD peers into the distance, trying to determine what the commotion is. The SECOND GUARD distractedly cleans his fingernails with his spear.

**EXT. HILLY PLAIN - CONTINUOUS**

Back to the full shot of the soldiers charging, getting more and more berserk.

**EXT. FORTRESS GATE - CONTINUOUS**

The first guard taps the second guard on the arm and points towards the attackers. The shouting gradually gets louder. The second guard puts his hand over his eyes and looks out at the plain, then slumps his shoulders. He bangs on the gate. A THIRD GUARD looks over the fortress wall above them. The second guard points at the attackers. The third guard rolls his eyes and shouts down to someone inside.

THIRD GUARD

I need a century here! Incoming!

**EXT. HILLY PLAIN - CONTINUOUS**

The soldiers' frenzy reaches a fever pitch.

**EXT. FORTRESS GATE - CONTINUOUS**

The gate opens and eighty well-organized Roman soldiers, each carrying a sword and shield, exit the fortress and march towards the attackers.

The two groups smash into each other. The would-be invaders are effortlessly slaughtered by the Romans, who are completely bored during the short battle. When it's over, the Romans wipe their swords off on the bodies and march back inside the fortress.

**EXT. HILLY PLAIN - CONTINUOUS**

Two middle-aged women in filthy rags, PORTIA and FABIA, are taking a break from making mud bricks to watch the battle.

PORTIA

What was that all about?

FABIA

I think it was some of those  
slave-freeing vigilante types.

PORTIA

Oh.

They go back to their work.

FABIA

I heard Judith's boy was enslaved.

PORTIA

Oh no.

FABIA

Yes, it's a mean old world.

PORTIA

This can't keep happening!

Fabia continues to work for a beat while Portia fumes.

FABIA

What do you mean?

PORTIA

I mean the Romans should stop  
enslaving our children.

FABIA

I don't think I follow. They need  
slaves. How else would everything  
get built?

PORTIA

They could hire people. Adults!

FABIA

But then what would the slave  
children do?

PORTIA

They could stay home until they're  
grown. And we could educate them!  
Teach them the ways of the world.

FABIA

But don't the Romans already do  
that? I mean, they take them and  
enslave them. That's the way of  
the world.

PORTIA

But what if they didn't?

Fabia's eyes narrow.

FABIA

Are you a revolutionary?

PORTIA

What? No! I just don't want my  
children to be slaves.

FABIA

And why are your children so  
special? Do you think you're  
better than the rest of us?

PORTIA

No! I don't think ANY children  
should be slaves!

FABIA

Oh, so now you're telling me how to raise my kids! Look, when I was a girl, the Romans stole me from my parents and sold me into slavery, and I turned out okay!

PORTIA

But you're covered in filth and live in the street with just rotting animal hides for shelter.

FABIA

And who built that street? The Romans! Thanks for proving my point!

PORTIA

How'd you get free?

FABIA

What?

PORTIA

You were a slave. Now you're not. So how'd you get free?

FABIA

I bought my freedom.

PORTIA

How? Slaves aren't paid.

FABIA

Well...It was pretty cheap, actually. I wasn't a very good slave. They said I didn't moan enough. So they let me go for a few bread crusts and a piece of string. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to collect some dung to fix the hole in the roof.