

GLADIATRIX

Written by

Gary J Rose

Groser1@pacbell.net
(530) 613-9232

FADE IN:

EXT. ANCIENT COASTAL CITY - NIGHT

A slow FLYOVER:

Stone temples gleaming under torchlight.

Market stalls shuttering for the night.

Distant ships at anchor in the moonlit bay.

Then— BOOM — a ROAR.

The camera pivots toward the amphitheater — flame-lit arches glowing against the dark hills. Torches blaze along the rim.

TRUMPETS blare. Drums pound like a heartbeat. The roar grows louder, a storm trapped in stone.

CLOSER— We soar down into the mouth of the arena, diving through:

Stone corridors.

Masked guards tightening armor.

Priests chanting prayers to bloody gods.

Oil lamps flickering against the sweat-streaked walls.

The sound builds — until we explode into—

EXT. HALICARNASSUS ARENA - NIGHT

A wall of NOISE slams into us.

The CROWD is already on its feet, fists pounding the air.

Flags wave. Dust swirls. Torches spit fire.

At the center dais, a flamboyant ANNOUNCER (50s), gold robes whipping in the night wind, raises his arms.

ANNOUNCER

(shouting)

From the far corners of empire—
beasts in bronze, wolves in flesh—
tonight, the gods demand BLOOD!

The crowd roars louder.

The Announcer points toward the far gate.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

The savage storm—unbroken, untamed—
AMAZON!

The gate CRANKS OPEN.

EXT. HALICARNASSUS ARENA - CONTINUOUS

AMAZON (30s) charges out — towering, powerful, Black. Her skin is marked by old battle scars. Her arms carved like stone. A wolf pelt draped over one shoulder. Her eyes burn with rage and memory—a barbarian queen turned beast of the sand.

She bellows toward the stands, gladius raised high.

The Announcer turns, gesturing to the opposite gate.

ANNOUNCER

And facing her—the shade of
Achilles reborn—
ACHILLIA!

The opposite gate grinds open.

ACHILLIA (late 20s) strides out — White, lean, athletic, with aristocratic features beneath a gleaming bronze helmet. Her movements are surgical. Her armor gleams — spotless, polished to a mirror sheen.

A noble-born tactician reborn as a killer.

She twirls her blade like a dancer warming up. Calculated.
Deadly.

EXT. HALICARNASSUS ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Amazon and Achillia face each other. Still. Breathing hard.
Knowing.

Then—

They CHARGE.

BLADES CLASH —

A scream of steel. Sparks fly. Blood sprays.

Amazon slashes.

Achillia counters.

EXT. LUDUS TRAINING PIT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Dust storms churn under harsh sun. Shackled women haul sandbags. Wooden swords CRACK against battered shields. Guards patrol like wolves, spears jabbing slow movers.

A SCARRED LANISTA circles the pit, barking orders.

LANISTA
(shouting)
You're not women here.
You're meat with swords! Prove
you're worth feeding!

A whistle BLARES.

Two by two, the fighters pair off.

Amazon pairs against a towering Germanic girl. Achillia faces a nimble Egyptian slave.

Clang. Grunts. Cries.

Amazon slams her opponent into the mud. Achillia disarms hers with brutal speed.

The Lanista watches... unimpressed.

LANISTA (CONT'D)
(snarling)
Enough prancing!
Fight like you mean to leave a
corpse!

He kicks a blade across the sand-lands between Amazon and Achillia.

The two women hesitate.

The other slaves draw back, sensing the air shift.

A beat.

Amazon lunges.

Achillia parries.

Not a drill. Not a lesson.

Rage. Resentment. A month's worth of bruises and hunger and humiliation explode between them.

THWACK – Amazon smashes Achillia's shield aside.

SLICE – Achillia opens a gash on Amazon's thigh.

Guards move forward—hesitant to intervene.

The Lanista watches—eyes gleaming.

Steel clashes against steel. Sand sprays. Blood spatters.

Finally—

Achillia forces Amazon down to one knee. Blade at her throat.

Amazon, bleeding, smiles up at her.

AMAZON
(grinning through blood)
"Do it."

Achillia hesitates—just a blink.

Guards SWARM.

They're beaten down, dragged apart.

The Lanista steps into the circle, voice cold and amused.

LANISTA
(to the guards)
Break them harder next time.
They're learning too much.

The women are hauled away, bruised and bloodied—but alive.

And something between them—something dangerous—has begun to spark.

Amazon grabs a fistful of hair, slams her forehead into Achillia's nose— CRUNCH.

Achillia stumbles, grinning through blood.

They circle— cutting, thrusting, bleeding.

The arena howls.

Then—

Both women strike at the same time.

Two blades flash.

Both collapse to their knees.

A stunned hush.

They rise again. Lock eyes.

And—

Drop their swords.

Gasps ripple through the stands.

EXT. HALICARNASSUS ARENA - UPPER LEVELS - CONTINUOUS

A golden chariot rolls into view.

On the raised platform, crowned in silk and gold:

EMPEROR DOMITIAN (40s)—decadent, cruel. Flanked by Roman standards and guards.

The Announcer nearly chokes on his words.

ANNOUNCER

The divine son of Vespasian... The sword of Rome... Emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus!

The crowd roars. Drums pound like thunder.

Domitian lifts a single hand—

SILENCE.

EXT. HALICARNASSUS ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Domitian gazes down with mild disdain.

DOMITIAN

Finish it.

The Editor steps forward, ready to command death.

But—

Amazon and Achillia refuse.

Standing wounded. Weapons dropped. Defiant.

EXT. IMPERIAL BOX - CONTINUOUS

A fat SENATOR mutters darkly.

SENATOR

Madness...

The EMPRESS (30s, calculating) leans forward, intrigued.

EMPRESS

No.....Bravery.

EXT. HALICARNASSUS ARENA - CONTINUOUS

The crowd stirs. A ripple at first— then a chant, growing louder:

CROWD (O.S.)

Missio! Missio! Missio!

Domitian scowls.

The Empress watches him carefully. She smiles — knowing he must bend or lose the crowd.

Domitian raises his hand — slow, grudging.

ANNOUNCER (ECSTATIC)

MISSIO GRANTED!

The arena erupts. Drums thunder. Flags whip in the wind.

Amazon and Achillia sink into the sand, side by side— Not defeated. Victorious in defiance.

EXT. HALICARNASSUS STREETS - THAT NIGHT

A mob celebration.

Bread is thrown into the crowds.

Wine spills from amphorae.

Dice rattle in gutters as bets are paid and lost.

On crude walls:

New graffiti— AMAZON and ACHILLIA, larger than life.

GAMBLER

(to no one)

Ten-to-one says the Emperor kills them anyway.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - PRIVATE STRATEGY ROOM - NIGHT

Torchlight flickers over maps and scrolls.

Domitian stands before a new marble relief:

Amazon and Achillia—carved into eternity.

He is not pleased.

The Empress lounges nearby, sipping wine.

DOMITIAN

They were meant to bleed.
Not become gods.

His ADVISOR (60s, rat-faced) shuffles nervously.

ADVISOR

Shall we free them, my lord? As
custom demands?

Domitian's fingers drum the marble.

DOMITIAN

No. Separate them. Break them. Sell
them to the provinces. Out of
sight. Out of mind.

He crushes a small figurine underfoot.

The Empress raises her goblet in silent toast.

EMPRESS

Legends die slowly.
But starvation hastens the rot.

Domitian smiles thinly.

DOMITIAN

Let them rot.

EXT. LUDUS HOLDING YARD - DAWN

Gray mist. Cold. Silent.

Amazon and Achillia stand shackled, facing two different
carts.

Amazon shoved toward a gilded cart (private games).

Achillia dragged toward a rickety open-air cart (provincial
death pits).

A cruel LANISTA shouts commands.

LANISTA
New masters await!

Amazon and Achillia lock eyes across the yard.

AMAZON (LOW)
We carve deeper.

Achillia almost smiles.

CRACK -
A whip snaps.

Guards tear them apart.

The carts roll in opposite directions -
toward separate fates.

EXT. SLAVE BATHHOUSE - DAWN

Steam rises off cracked marble pools. The "baths" are nothing like noble spas - cracked basins, algae-streaked walls, the stench of sweat and old blood.

Shackled prisoners strip under the guards' glares. Fresh recruits - men and women - shoved into freezing water to scrub the filth from their skin.

Amazon is forced into one pool - alone. Her muscles ripple as she dunks herself, bruises blooming across her dark skin.

Across the courtyard- Achillia is tossed naked into another pit, crowded with criminals and exhausted beast-fighters. A filthy Thracian woman sneers at her, spitting into the water.

A GUARD (bored) smirks at the sight. Another tosses a rusty blade onto the edge of the bath.

GUARD
(half-mocking)
Scrub quick, girls.
You'll need clean throats for the sand.

Amazon and Achillia are separated by distance, filth, and fate and lock eyes across the steam.

Nothing said.

But the bond, the defiance, burns hotter than ever.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MORNING

Crowds surge toward the amphitheater - a human river. Vendors shove greasy loaves into dirty hands. Bread rains down from balconies in a crude imperial "gift."

Cries fill the air-

VENDOR

Bread! Blood! Glory for sale!

GAMBLER

(raising a clay cup)

Long live the wolf-woman!

(beat)

Or kill her quicker!

The city's lower alleys overflow with ragged spectators scrambling for scraps.

Above them - Nobles in polished togas sip wine on shaded terraces, tossing coins into the throng like gods.

A SENATOR (50s, pompous) sneers as he watches a woman fight over a moldy loaf.

SENATOR

(low, amused)

Give them bread and blood.

And they'll cheer while Rome rots.

Behind him, a parade of painted murals rolls by - grotesque images of Amazon and Achillia, locked in eternal combat.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALICARNASSUS LOWER STREETS - DAWN

A fetid mist clings to the cobbled streets.

Amazon's cart rattles downhill through the grime-soaked alleys. Guards shout at beggars to clear the way.

She watches-silent, chained-absorbing the city's rotting soul.

A row of SLAVES crouch near the amphitheater's pillars, casually urinating into giant clay basins.

A DONKEY CART clatters past, loaded with brimming barrels of yellow liquid. The STENCH is unbearable.

An OVERSEER (40s, cruel) smacks a slave boy with a stick.

OVERSEER

(cursing)

Careful with that! That's coin, you
piss-rats!
That's soap! That's perfume! That's
Rome!

The urine barrels are stacked carefully-treasured like gold.

Amazon stares, disgusted but unsurprised.

As the cart jerks forward, her eyes rise past the filth to
the distant gleam of the imperial palace-towering and pure.

A brutal contrast. A bitter truth.

A NOBLEMAN watches from a shaded balcony, sipping wine.

NOBLEMAN

(to no one)

From piss to perfume.
Only Rome could make a miracle from
rot.

The cart jolts again-Amazon grips the sides, face unreadable.

She's seen this city's soul now. It's not marble and glory.

It's rot and hunger... disguised by gold.

EXT. PRIVATE VILLA - EDGE OF HALICARNASSUS - LATE MORNING

The cart bearing Amazon bumps through an ornate gate.

Inside: An opulent villa sprawls against manicured gardens.
Mosaics gleam under the rising sun.

But past the beauty- A smaller, shadowed ARENA. A private
blood pit, surrounded by tiers of velvet-seated stands.

Wealthy PATRONS laugh and sip from goblets under silk
canopies.

Amazon is yanked from the cart. Her chains clatter against
marble steps.

LANISTA (O.S.)

(grinning)

The emperor sends his regards.
Fight well, and you might live a
few more moons.

She's dragged toward the pit. Past drunken aristocrats betting on flesh. Past caged animals – leopards pacing, bulls snorting.

As she passes a cell, a bloodied fighter coughs weakly inside – chained to the wall.

This is not glory. This is not Rome. This is the slaughterhouse of forgotten gods.

Amazon's jaw clenches, but her eyes burn steady:

She will not be forgotten.

EXT. DESERT PROVINCIAL ARENA – HIGH NOON

Achillia's rickety cart creaks into a barren wasteland.

No marble here. Only sun-bleached bones. And a crude wooden ring hammered into dry earth.

A few scattered tents sag in the heat. A handful of SPECTATORS – peasants, soldiers, whores – gather, bored and sweating.

A cracked banner flaps limply:

"Games of the Scorpion Moon."

A fat SLAVE MASTER leers as Achillia is kicked from the cart.

SLAVE MASTER

(grinning)

Fresh meat! Pretty enough to sell!
Fierce enough to die screaming!

Achillia picks herself up slowly. Staring at the cracked, sunken fighting pit ahead.

In the distance– Battered cages hold starving wolves and half-dead gladiators.

She's not here for glory. She's here for death.

But her spine stays straight. Her gaze stays cold.

ACHILLIA (V.O.)

Let them bury me here...
I will still carve my name into the
bones of this desert.

The sun beats down like a hammer.

Achillia tightens her fists.

Ready.

EXT. PRIVATE ARENA - AFTERNOON

A sunbeam cuts through silk banners overhead. Soft music plays – lyres and flutes. A garden party of DECADENT PATRONS lounges, laughing and sipping wine.

But on the sand below– a nightmare.

AMAZON stands in the center of the pit. Chainmail skirt. Crude iron greaves. Bare arms glistening with sweat.

Across from her: Two male retiarii – net and trident fighters – smirking.

A NOBLEWOMAN, drunk and waving a perfumed scarf, shouts:

NOBLEWOMAN

I bet two denarii she won't last a minute!

LAUGHTER.

A trumpet sounds.

The retiarii circle her, net twirling, tridents probing.

Amazon doesn't flinch.

When the first one lunges– she sidesteps, grabs the net – and yanks him off balance.

One brutal move: SNAP – his knee twists the wrong way.

Before the second retiarius can react, Amazon charges: head lowered, shoulder driving into his gut.

They crash into the sand.

The crowd gasps – not from pity, but delight.

Blood spatters the white marble of the stands.

Amazon rises, breathing hard, trident gripped in her hand now.

The noblewoman squeals in laughter. The lanista claps lazily.

But Amazon doesn't acknowledge them. She looks up – past the velvet canopies.

Toward the open sky.

Toward freedom.

A guard cracks a whip beside her.

GUARD

Bow, bitch!

Amazon slowly kneels.

But her eyes – her spirit – never do.

EXT. DESERT ARENA – SAME TIME

Sweat drips down Achillia's face.

The cracked pit around her bakes under the merciless sun.

In the stands, a handful of PEASANTS jeer and spit.

SLAVE MASTER

(shouting)

Release the dogs!

Rusty cages creak open.

TWO STARVING WOLVES lurch into the arena – ribs showing, teeth bared.

Achillia draws a short gladius – dull, pitted with rust.

The wolves snarl, circling.

The first lunges.

Achillia sidesteps – slashes – blood sprays the sand.

The second wolf comes faster, crazed by hunger.

It clamps onto her forearm.

Achillia doesn't scream.

Instead – she drives the blade into the wolf's ribs, twisting.

It collapses.

Silence.

The peasants blink – almost disappointed.

Then a slow cheer rises.

PEASANT (O.S.)
Another match! Bring out more
beasts!

The slave master nods greedily.

But Achillia stands tall in the ruined pit – bloodied,
breathing hard – unbroken.

ACHILLIA (V.O.)
This is not death.
This is sharpening.

EXT. CITY MARKET – EARLY MORNING

Vendors sling baskets of moldy bread into the streets.

Slave boys collect urine jars for perfume makers (yes – the
historical piss-to-perfume industry).

Over the chaos, propaganda criers shout:

CRIER
"Glory to Emperor Domitian! Blood
games at sunset!

Foreign beasts and whores will fight for Rome's pleasure!"

We glimpse graffiti of Amazon and Achillia being painted
crudely on alley walls – the public already mythologizing
them.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE – PRIVATE STRATEGY ROOM – NIGHT

Domitian meets with the Empress and the Advisor.

They lay out the grand spectacle:

Amazon vs Achillia.

Billed as "the Blood Moon Duel."

DOMITIAN
The women will be forced to
fight... and only one will live.

The Empress smiles, draping a red silk cloth over a small
bronze statue labeled:

"The Last Goddess Standing."

EXT. COLOSSEUM MAIN GATES - SAME DAY

The gates loom massive – a mountain of stone and shadow. Crowds bottleneck through narrow arches, herded like cattle.

Beside the columns– Large CLAY BASINS sit out in the open, half-filled with yellow liquid.

People squat casually over them – men, women, even children – no shame. Just life.

A slave boy, scrawny and barefoot, hauls a heavy bowl sloshing with urine toward a waiting barrel strapped to a donkey cart.

OVERSEER (O.S.)

(gruff)

Careful with that, boy!
That's coin! That's soap! That's
Rome!

He slaps the boy aside. A second slave sprinkles crushed mint leaves into the reeking barrel to mask the stench.

Nearby, a rotund NOBLEMAN sips wine from a jeweled cup, watching it all with idle amusement.

NOBLEMAN

(chuckling)

From piss to perfume.
That's civilization, boy. The smell
of victory.

The crowd keeps pushing forward.

Toward the mouth of the arena.

Toward the blood.

INT. ARENA PREP CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

A cold, low-lit stone room. The walls sweat moisture. Iron hooks line the sides. Bloodstains darken the floor.

A grim-faced ARENA SURGEON (50s, greasy hair, stained robes) moves methodically between gladiators.

He pries open mouths. Inspects joints. Checks wounds.

The line shuffles forward – battered fighters awaiting judgment.

The surgeon grabs Amazon by the chin. Shoves a stick into her mouth, checking her teeth.

SURGEON
(gruff)
Good jaw. Strong lungs. No fever.

He moves to Achillia. Bends her wrist sharply, watches her flinch.

SURGEON (CONT'D)
(smirk)
Favoring your left. A bad omen.

Achillia yanks her hand free, glaring. The surgeon just grunts and scribbles something on a wax tablet.

In the corner, a NOBLEMAN swirls wine in a bronze cup, leering.

NOBLEMAN
(to no one)
Fifty denarii says the savage
bleeds first.

Amazon hears him. Doesn't react. Achillia meets the noble's eyes – and smiles coldly.

ACHILLIA
(quiet)
Make it a hundred.

The nobleman laughs – uneasy now.

The surgeon moves on. The final checks complete.

A BELL tolls from above.

The time has come.

EXT. COLOSSEUM – UPPER TIERS – CONTINUOUS

Slaves climb the stone stairways, lugging massive baskets of bread.

The CROWD, whipped into a frenzy, surges forward.

Bread loaves are tossed into the masses – a chaotic feeding frenzy. People grab, claw, fight for scraps.

COINS fly through the air – showering the sands below.

VENDORS shout over the din:

VENDOR
(booming)
Bread for the belly! Blood for the
soul!

A drunk MERCHANT stumbles, clutching a half-eaten loaf.

MERCHANT
(laughing)
Let them starve tomorrow – tonight,
they feast!

EXT. COLOSSEUM – ARENA FLOOR – SAME

The sand is littered with coins, crusts, and trampled
flowers.

Torchbearers line the arena rim, setting fires to massive
braziers.

The smoke curls upward – thick, greasy, choking.

High above, in the Imperial Box–

Domitian and the Empress watch, detached.

DOMITIAN
(musing)
Bread and blood. Enough for the
fools to call it empire.

EMPRESS
(sipping wine)
Until the gods demand more.

INT. LUDUS – ARMOR CHAMBER – NIGHT

Dim firelight flickers over rows of battered armor.

AMAZON stands tall as two SLAVES strap heavy bronze shoulder
guards onto her. Her skin glistens with oil – scars and
tribal ink glowing under torchlight.

A WARRIOR PRIESTESS paints crimson streaks across her
collarbone.

PRIESTESS
 (softly, in Latin)
 For the blood you will take.

Across the room—

ACHILLIA sits, silent, as her armor is assembled with ruthless precision. Blackened bronze plates. A fitted breastplate engraved with a serpent.

Another PRIESTESS paints a stark white line down her spine — from neck to lower back.

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 For the blood you will give.

Neither woman speaks. Neither flinches.

Their breathing deepens. Their eyes harden.

This is not just a fight.

It is an ascension.

INT. EMPRESS'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - NIGHT

The EMPRESS stands at a gilded balcony overlooking the torch-lit city.

Servants pour dark wine into goblets.

Below her: The city rages with excitement. Drums pound. Graffiti artists splash new images of AMAZON and ACHILLIA across stone walls.

The Empress raises her cup to her assembled nobles.

EMPRESS
 Tomorrow, the sand drinks deeper.
 And Rome forgets its hunger.

Nobles murmur in agreement. Some less convinced than others.

SENATOR VARRO, lean and bitter, leans toward a confidant:

SENATOR VARRO
 (whispering)
 Bread and blood.
 Nothing changes while they feast.

INT. CITY TAVERN - SAME TIME

Inside a smoky tavern packed with gamblers and thieves—

A massive painted banner of AMAZON and ACHILLIA hangs crooked above the hearth.

BETS are shouted across crowded tables.

GAMBLER #1

Ten to one — the barbarian falls first!

GAMBLER #2

I'll take the Roman girl! She'll dance circles around her!

CHEERS erupt. Coins slam down.

In a corner, a hooded figure — eyes sharp, calculating — listens without joining the frenzy.

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - NIGHT

Torch vendors hawk cheap replicas of gladii. Children chase each other, pretending to duel.

A drunk stumbles against a graffiti wall — smearing the freshly painted faces of Amazon and Achillia into a grotesque blur.

Above it all, the Colosseum looms — a sleeping giant ready to feast.

EXT. COLOSSEUM - SUNRISE

The first golden light bleeds across the city.

Crowds swarm toward the arena — peasants, merchants, nobles, thieves — a tide of humanity driven by hunger for blood.

EXT. COLOSSEUM - ENTRANCE SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Dozens of men and women squat casually over wide clay basins placed at the entrances.

No shame. Just business.

Nearby, SLAVES in tunics rush about, collecting brimming bowls of URINE.

They pour the liquid into massive vats strapped to mule carts.

OVERSEER
(barking)
Keep it moving!
That's fuller's gold, you bastards!
That's the empire's laundry!

One boy tosses crushed mint into the vats to mask the stench.

A fat NOBLEMAN, sipping wine, watches amusedly from his litter.

NOBLEMAN
(grinning)
From piss to perfume.
That's Roman ingenuity.

The CROWD roars somewhere within – the games are about to begin.

EXT. COLOSSEUM – UPPER TIERS – CONTINUOUS

Baskets of BREAD are hurled into the seated masses.

Crowds scramble, clawing for crusts like starving dogs.

A COIN PURSE jingles. Bets are placed. Wine flows.

From the upper balcony, banners flap wildly:

THE BLOOD MOON DUEL – AMAZON vs. ACHILLIA

The chant begins low... then builds...

CROWD

A-MA-ZON!

A-CHILL-IA!

A-MA-ZON!

A-CHILL-IA!

The ground seems to vibrate beneath them.

NT. IMPERIAL BOX - COLOSSEUM - SAME TIME

The Imperial Box gleams with gold and silk. An island of opulence overlooking a sea of sweat and blood.

Emperor DOMITIAN reclines lazily, goblet in hand. His tunic is embroidered with phoenixes - rebirth from fire.

The EMPRESS lounges beside him, masked in jewels and disinterest.

A cluster of SENATORS and ARISTOCRATS hover nearby, whispering, gambling, scheming.

DOMITIAN
(to Empress, bored)
Bread for their bellies. Blood for
their prayers.

Nothing else matters.

EMPRESS
(softly)
Until it does.

She smiles slyly, watching a group of wealthy PATRICIANS place hurried bets.

Nearby, an OFFICIAL SCRIBE leans over a long scroll covered in names and odds.

SENATOR TULLIUS VARRO (50s, pompous) steps forward, wagging a fat finger.

VARRO
(boasting)
Fifty aureii on the Roman girl.
Blood before sunrise.

A lean PRAETORIAN COMMANDER, arms folded, counters coldly:

COMMANDER
(smiling thinly)
I'll wager double the Amazon
outlasts her.
Wild beasts die hard.

Laughter. Coin purses change hands.

Domitian watches all this - amused, detached.

DOMITIAN

(to no one)

Bet on what you like.
In the end, the sand drinks all.

The Empress lifts her goblet in silent toast.

EMPRESS

To blood.
To rot. To Rome.

The crowd's roar deepens – a thunderous call for the duel to begin.

Domitian smiles faintly.

DOMITIAN

(whispered)

Let them tear the sun down if they
can.

NT. GLADIATOR CELLS – COLOSSEUM – PRE-DAWN

The air is thick – sweat, incense, fear.

The cells line a stone corridor like tombs. Each barred door a coffin waiting to close.

Inside her cell, AMAZON kneels beside a battered wooden chest. She unwraps a worn strip of cloth – inside, a carved wooden token: a wolf, crude but powerful.

She presses it to her forehead, whispering in a language long lost to Rome.

Across the corridor, ACHILLIA sharpens her blade with slow, rhythmic strokes. The steel flashes in the torchlight.

No prayers. No charms. Just focus.

The LANISTA (scarred, scowling) stalks past the cells, barking orders.

LANISTA

(rough)

Last match of the Blood Moon
festival.
Make the crowd believe the gods
still care.

He stops at Amazon's cell. Sneers.

LANISTA (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Beasts don't pray, wolf.

Move on.

Achillia watches him disappear down the corridor. Her hand tightens around the blade.

Across the hall, Amazon looks up. Their eyes meet – a flicker of something human under the armor.

Not fear. Not hate.

Recognition.

A beat.

AMAZON

(softly)

One way or another...

we carve deeper.

Achillia doesn't answer.

She slides the blade into its sheath.

Silent.

Ready.

INT. AMAZON'S CELL - NIGHT

A torch flickers low.

AMAZON sits on her cot, silent.

The door creaks. A GUARD enters, shoving a young man inside – toned, trembling slightly, head bowed.

GUARD

(gruff)

A gift from your patron.

Make use of him. Or don't. Tomorrow

you'll be dust either way.

The door slams.

The man doesn't speak – just kneels.

Amazon studies him – not with lust, but something colder. Something lonelier.

She crosses the room slowly, like approaching prey.

AMAZON
(quietly)
What's your name?

He doesn't answer.

AMAZON (CONT'D)
(softer)
Doesn't matter.

She kneels before him. Touches his face – a tender ghost of a touch. His breath shudders.

A beat.

Then – she kisses him.

Not passion. Not romance.

Need.

Desperation.

The raw, brutal hunger to feel alive one last time.

They fall back onto the cot, skin against skin, the torchlight trembling with them.

No moans. No words.

Only the quiet, rhythmic crash of two broken things clinging to each other.

CUT TO:

INT. ACHILLIA'S CELL - SIMULTANEOUS

Alone.

ACHILLIA sits cross-legged, blade across her knees, breathing steady.

Outside her door, a GUARD whispers with another.

GUARD 1
She refused.
Said she needs no comfort.

GUARD 2
(pitying)
Foolish pride.

They walk away.

Inside, Achillia opens her eyes.

No tears. No regret.

Only fire.

ACHILLIA
(whispering to herself)
I belong to no one.

She stands.

Ready.

EXT. COLOSSEUM - HOLDING TUNNELS - PRE-DAWN

The air is thick with smoke from braziers.

Drums beat a slow, heavy rhythm – like a heartbeat dragged toward its last thud.

AMAZON stands alone at her gate, armored, her war paint smeared from sweat and memory.

Across the sand, through iron bars, ACHILLIA mirrors her – blackened bronze armor gleaming under the torchlight, her blade resting across her shoulders.

The CROWD above begins to murmur, the pressure building.

A PRIEST steps forward beside each woman.

Amazon's priest mutters a blessing, waving smoking incense.

Achillia's priest splashes her forehead with wine – a ritual of purification before death.

They barely notice.

Their eyes are locked across the sands.

Two wolves. Two storms. Bound by fate.

The heavy IRON GATES begin to RISE with a grinding screech.

Daylight slashes through the dark tunnels.

The final moment.

No words.

No fear.

They step forward – together.

EXT. COLOSSEUM – ARENA FLOOR – CONTINUOUS

Amazon and Achillia emerge onto the burning sands.

The CROWD erupts into a deafening roar – the sound of 50,000 souls howling for blood.

Dust churns. Trumpets scream. Flags whip in the savage wind.

Banners of AMAZON and ACHILLIA hang from the upper tiers.

From the IMPERIAL BOX, DOMITIAN rises – draped in gold and silk, his laurel crown catching the sun.

He extends one hand.

The arena falls silent – as if the gods themselves hold their breath.

DOMITIAN

(shouting)

Let the gods feast first. Then
Rome!

He lowers his hand.

A CRIMSON BANNER drops from the Imperial Box.

The signal.

Amazon and Achillia circle each other slowly – blades drawn.

Neither rushes.

Neither trembles.

Two storms, gathering.

The CROWD begins to CHANT – low at first, then rising, pulsing like a heartbeat.

CROWD A-MA-ZON! A-CHILL-IA! A-MA-ZON! A-CHILL-IA!

They tighten the circle. Closer. Closer.

Then–

THEY CHARGE.

Steel crashes against steel.

Sand flies.

Blood spatters.

EXT. HALICARNASSUS ARENA - BACK GATES - DAWN

Gray mist curls over the sand. The last of the revelers stumble home, drunk on blood and wine.

Amazon and Achillia stand shackled outside the bloodstained walls. No cheers now. Only the sound of iron chains clinking.

Two CAGES are being loaded onto separate wagons.

LANISTA (O.S.)

(shouting)

"By imperial order - the bitches
are separated!"

Amazon is shoved toward a heavy, barred cage on a GILDED WAGON - destined for elite private games.

Achillia is yanked toward a rusted cart packed with shackled criminals - bound for the brutal death pits of Numidia.

They resist instinctively - yanked harder by the guards.

AMAZON

(low, fierce)

We carve deeper.

ACHILLIA

(quietly, a ghost of a
smile)

Until Rome bleeds.

Their gazes lock - one last moment of shared defiance.

CRACK!

A whip lashes across Amazon's back, forcing her into the wagon.

Achillia is clubbed across the shoulder - shoved forward.

The cages SLAM shut.

Wheels creak. The wagons roll in opposite directions - swallowed by mist and destiny.

Overhead, the tattered banners of the games whip in the wind - their faces already fading.

EXT. IMPERIAL BALCONY - MORNING

Domitian watches the wagons disappear from a marble balcony.

His ADVISOR hovers nervously.

ADVISOR

(whispering)

There is... murmuring in the
Senate, my lord. About the
impropriety of displaying women in
the arena.

Domitian sips wine, unbothered.

DOMITIAN

(coldly)

Let them mutter. Their daughters
line up to watch.

The Empress smirks behind her goblet.

EMPRESS

And when the mobs starve, they will
beg for worse than women with
swords."

Domitian smiles thinly, but his gaze darkens.

DOMITIAN

Then we give them more blood.

He turns away -

The banners of Amazon and Achillia fluttering like dying
prayers behind him.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - STRATEGY ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

The torches burn low. Smoke clings to the marble walls.

Domitian stands at a massive stone table, staring down at a
crumbling map of the empire. Tiny clay figurines - ships,
legions, grain carts - are scattered across it.

His ADVISOR approaches, carrying a scroll heavy with bad
news.

ADVISOR

(nervous)

"Unrest spreads, my lord.

(MORE)

ADVISOR (CONT'D)

Alexandria riots again. Grain shipments to Ostia delayed. Senators whisper that you spend more on games than governance."

Domitian doesn't look up.

DOMITIAN

(dry)

And what would they prefer? Bread without circuses? Civil war?

The Empress drifts in, trailing silks behind her, a chalice of wine balanced in her hand.

EMPRESS

(mocking)

They preferred to watch women bleed... Until it became inconvenient to their dignity.

Domitian's hand tightens on the edge of the map, crumpling a province under his palm.

DOMITIAN

Let them whisper. The louder they whisper, the closer they are to begging.

ADVISOR

(lowering his voice)

And the gladiatrices, sire? Some say their survival... emboldens dissent.

A beat.

Domitian looks up. His eyes gleam cold.

DOMITIAN

Then we use them.

The Empress smiles slowly, sensing blood.

EMPRESS

New games.
New gods to appease the mob.

DOMITIAN

And when the stones run red with their blood, the Senate will clap louder than the mob.

He sweeps the clay figurines off the map with a flick of his hand – they scatter like broken bones.

DOMITIAN (CONT'D)

(quiet)

Arrange it.

The Advisor bows and backs away, trembling.

The Empress raises her cup in a silent toast to the coming slaughter.

FADE OUT.

EXT. PRIVATE VILLA ARENA - NIGHT

Torches hiss in the rain. A private colonnaded arena – decadent, miniature, reserved for Rome's elite parasites.

Amazon stands at the center – chained at the ankles, dressed in ceremonial bronze armor polished to a cruel gleam.

A FAT PATRICIAN waves a goblet, laughing.

FAT PATRICIAN

Let the savage dance!

From the shadows, two armored dwarves charge at Amazon – mock gladiators, wielding blunted axes.

The aristocrats howl with laughter.

Amazon parries one dwarf's swing – spins – kicks the other to the dirt. She's not performing. She's surviving.

Blood drips from her temple.

GILDED MATRON

(fanning herself)

She moves like a beast! Can we see her fight bare?

The LANISTA overseeing the games bows.

LANISTA

At your command, domina.

The aristocrats shout drunken approval.

The dwarves advance again – this time with real weapons.

Amazon steels herself.

Eyes flash to the side:

- Two leashed LIONS snarl from the shadows, handlers barely restraining them.

This is no game anymore.

FAT PATRICIAN
Make the wolf-queen dance...
Or feed her to the lions!

The crowd ROARS.

Amazon locks eyes with the lions. Then at the laughing Roman filth around her.

And she smiles - bloody, wolfish.

She charges - not at the dwarves, not at the lions - but at the fat patrician himself.

Chaos erupts.

Guards pile in. Blades flash. Blood sprays the marble.

Amazon is beaten down - but not broken.

As she is dragged away in chains, she spits at the noble's sandals.

AMAZON
(through split lips)
I am no one's parlor trick.

The patricians boo.

Wine spills.

Coins are tossed like scraps after a dogfight.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA - DUSK

Dust hangs thick over a crude, crumbling arena carved into the earth. No marble. No grandeur. Just blood and spectacle.

A mangy crowd of peasants, soldiers, and drunkards gather, tossing coins and leering.

From the stone tunnels, ACHILLIA emerges - no ceremony, no fanfare. Her armor is dented. Her knuckles raw. The fire of Rome still burns in her eyes - but it flickers.

Across the pit: Three "beasts" wait – gladiators dressed in bear hides, faces painted red with blood. Their hands are bound with iron claws.

The CROWD CHANTS:

CROWD
Feed the beasts! Feed the beasts!

A loud CLANG of a gong.

The beasts charge.

Achillia moves – not with artful grace – but pure, grim efficiency.

She ducks. Slashes. Disarms. One beast is gutted. Another has his knee shattered.

The third beast tackles her into the dirt. They roll – fists flying – blood smearing across the sand.

A brutal, desperate brawl.

Finally, Achillia pins the last beast – blade to throat.

She hesitates – breathing hard.

The CROWD screams for blood.

She looks up – at the jeering mob. At the wretched ruins of Rome.

And kills – one swift, merciful thrust.

Blood sprays.

The mob howls with approval.

Achillia rises alone – drenched in blood, hollow-eyed.

Not a victor.

A survivor.

EXT. PRIVATE VILLA ARENA – NIGHT

A lavish, private villa just outside Halicarnassus. Silk banners sway. Lanterns glow along marble columns. A decadent party spills out – nobles, drunk on wine and bloodlust.

In the center: AMAZON stands shackled before a small arena pit. Barefoot. Bare-chested. Scarred. Furious.

A fat ROMAN PATRICIAN (50s) leers at her from a golden balcony.

PATRICIAN
(booming)
Tonight, my friends... the savage
queen bends the knee!

The crowd CHEERS.

Slaves drag out her opponent – a hulking, chained THRACIAN MAN, drugged and glassy-eyed. A massive brute. But barely conscious.

The PATRICIAN throws down a wooden sword – no blade, just mockery.

PATRICIAN (CONT'D)
Make it look good! Our wives bore
easily!

Laughter.

Amazon picks up the wooden sword – testing its weight. Then she looks at the Thracian. At the chains. At the drunken mob.

Her lip curls in disgust.

She SNAPS the wooden sword across her knee. Tosses the splinters aside.

The crowd gasps.

The guards step forward, sensing danger.

The Patrician sneers.

PATRICIAN (CONT'D)
Break her! Break the beast!

Guards rush. Chains rattle.

Amazon doesn't flinch.

She lunges – savage, precise –

Breaks a guard's nose with her elbow.

Slams another into a pillar.

Kicks a third down the marble steps.

Chaos erupts.

Screams. Crashing goblets. Slaves scattering.

The Patrician retreats behind his guards, furious and terrified.

Amazon tears the collar from her neck and throws it into the fire.

The flames roar.

She bolts into the night – a fugitive.

A wolf unchained.

EXT. PROVINCIAL DEATH PIT - DAY

A pit carved into the earth – rough, brutal, cruel. No grandstands. No silk. Just dirt, blood, and men howling for death.

ACHILLIA stands at the ready. Helmet tucked under her arm. Armor stripped to the bare minimum – nothing wasted, nothing pretty.

The sun scorches down. Dust clouds cling to sweat.

Across the pit, THREE MEN are shoved into the ring – criminals, deserters, starving wretches armed with chipped blades.

The CROWD leans over the edge, throwing rotten fruit, coins, curses.

A DRUNK PATRON spits.

DRUNK PATRON
Let's see if the whore can dance!

The Overseer lowers a RED FLAG.

It flutters... then falls.

The men rush her.

Achillia moves with terrifying grace:

Duck. Slice.

Elbow to the temple.

Spin. Blade through ribs.

One down. Another screaming.

A second swings wild – she sidesteps, disarms him, and buries her dagger under his jaw.

Only one left – a scarred brute twice her size.

He charges.

Achillia doesn't move.

At the last instant – she sidesteps. Sweeps his leg. Drives her blade into the back of his knee.

He topples, shrieking.

She stands over him – blade poised for the kill.

The crowd screams for blood.

Achillia hesitates—just for a breath.

Then... Sinks the blade cleanly into his chest.

Not rage. Not cruelty. Efficiency.

The crowd goes berserk.

Coins rain down into the pit, clattering at her feet.

She doesn't bow. She doesn't acknowledge them.

She just walks away – dripping blood and dust.

A blade without a master.

EXT. SYRIAN BORDER ARENA - AFTERNOON

A sun-blasted pit carved into cracked desert stone. No grandstands – just rickety benches packed with sweating peasants and traders.

A BLEATING GOAT is led across the sand – bait.

At one end – an IRON CAGE.

Inside – AMAZON, shackled, battered, but burning with rage.

The gate GRINDS OPEN.

A HUNGRY LEOPARD – ribs showing, crazed by hunger – is prodded forward by masked beast-handlers.

The crowd jeers, betting coins tossed like confetti.

A slaver unlocks Amazon's shackles – but leaves the chain trailing from her wrist.

SLAVER

(grinning)

Fight like an animal, die like one.

The handlers crack whips – the leopard leaps.

Amazon sidesteps – barely. The chain flicks – wraps around the beast's front paw. It thrashes, slashing the air.

Amazon uses the chain like a whip – dodging, striking – bleeding from shallow claw marks.

The leopard lunges – Amazon pulls hard – slamming it sideways into a stone column.

A gasp. A hush.

Amazon approaches – slow – chain taut.

The leopard tries one final pounce– Amazon sidesteps – drives the chain around its throat – twisting, wrenching.

The animal kicks... slows... goes limp.

Amazon drops to one knee, panting, bloodied.

The crowd goes silent–then ERUPTS.

Over the madness, an overseer shouts:

OVERSEER

(stern)

Feed her.

(Smirking)

She earned more than a grave today.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA – PORT CITY – SAME DAY

A cracked and battered arena tucked behind fish markets and brothels. The stench of salt, sweat, and desperation.

ACHILLIA stands under a crumbling arch, shield strapped to her arm, gladius in hand.

Before her – a female criminal, wild-eyed, emaciated, armed with nothing but a rusted dagger.

The crowd barely pays attention – more focused on gambling or drinking.

A trumpet BLARES.

Achillia advances – calm, economical.

The criminal shrieks – charges in a blind frenzy.

Achillia sidesteps – slashes once – the dagger drops, a tendon sliced.

The woman falls to her knees, gasping.

Achillia raises her gladius –

The crowd barely looks up.

She hesitates... Then drives the blade down – not into flesh, but into the dirt – next to the woman's trembling hand.

ACHILLIA

(low)

Live with your shame.

The Overseer overseeing the match frowns from the shaded seats. This was supposed to end in blood.

OVEREER

(gruff)

Finish her!

Achillia turns – and without a word, throws her gladius down at the Overseer's feet.

The crowd gasps. A few drunken jeers. Some laughs.

The Overseer stands, furious.

OVEREER (CONT'D)

(to guards)

Take her back in chains. No food.
No water.

Two guards rush in – seize Achillia roughly.

She doesn't fight.

She smiles.

Even here – she wins.

EXT. DUST ROAD – OUTSKIRTS OF PROVINCIAL CITY – NIGHT

A wagon creaks along a lonely road under a sliver of moon.

In the back, chained but upright, sits AMAZON – bruised, bloodied, but glaring defiance into the dark.

Beside her, other gladiators slump – beaten, broken. None meet her eyes.

The wagon stops. Guards bark orders.

GUARD
(offering water)
For the pretty ones only.

A jug is passed to a pale girl – the others ignored. Amazon is skipped entirely.

She stares at the jug. At the guards. No plea. No anger.

Instead, she grinds her manacle against the wagon's rusty edge – Rrrk-rrrk – over and over – cutting her wrist bloody, trying to wear it thinner.

The guards laugh.

GUARD #2
(to Amazon)
Save your strength, beast.
You'll need it when they throw you
to the dogs tomorrow.

Amazon says nothing. Keeps grinding.

Keeps bleeding.

Freedom is worth bleeding for.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA – DAWN

Crude wooden stands. A bloodstained pit barely larger than a courtyard.

The CROWD is rowdy – mostly drunken soldiers, merchants, and farmers. No noble pageantry here – just raw appetite.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(half-drunk)
From the edge of empire...
The savage queen of the lost
tribes...
AMAZON!

The gate slams open.

Amazon strides into the pit – no helmet, no shield. Just a chipped gladius and old, dented greaves. She looks smaller here. More vulnerable.

Across the sand: THREE MALE GLADIATORS – armored, rested, sneering.

The crowd howls. Coins flash in the sun – bets flying fast.

SPECTATOR #1

Ten sesterces she doesn't last two minutes!

SPECTATOR #2

Double it if they take her head!

A TRUMPET BLARES.

Amazon plants her bare feet in the sand. Raises her sword.

The first man charges. She sidesteps – fast – slashing the back of his knee. He goes down screaming.

The second moves in – Amazon lunges low, ramming the hilt into his groin. He collapses.

The third hesitates. Amazon grins through bloodied teeth.

AMAZON

Come, little man.
Come feed the sand.

The third lunges in desperation – Amazon counters, drives her blade straight through his ribs.

The crowd is stunned silent. Then ERUPTS into savage cheers.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

(hoarse, laughing)
The savage queen lives!

Amazon stands alone, heaving breath, blood dripping onto the red sand.

EXT. PROVINCIAL MARKET SQUARE – DAY

A crude makeshift arena – barely roped off from the muddy streets. No banners. No fanfare. Just jeering peasants and drunk soldiers.

A RAMSHACKLE CART rattles through the crowd. Caged inside like an animal – ACHILLIA, stripped of her armor, hands bound.

A BARKER shouts:

BARKER

Behold!
The Roman witch! Stripped low for
your coin and pleasure!

Coins are tossed into a bucket as bets are made.

In the "arena" – two half-trained female slaves, barely teenagers, clutch wooden clubs.

Achillia is shoved out of the cage into the mud. Her sword – gone. Only manacles remain.

The crowd chants:

CROWD

Beat her! Strip her! Break her!

The girls hesitate – terrified. Achillia locks eyes with them – calm, fierce.

One girl lunges clumsily – Achillia sidesteps, trips her with a brutal efficiency. The second girl raises her club – Achillia yanks the chain of her manacles, wrapping it around the club, wrenching it free.

She drops the club. Doesn't strike them.

Instead – she turns to the crowd. Raises her bloodied fists in defiance.

ACHILLIA

(hoarse)

Is this your Rome?
Boys with stones? Cowards?

The crowd BOOS, but some pockets of people – especially a few women – are silent. Watching. Thinking.

The guards move in to beat Achillia down, but the spark is lit.

INT. IMPERIAL SENATE CHAMBER – DAY

A vast marble hall. Statues of gods loom overhead, watching. Senators in blood-red togas murmur in cliques, their voices low and dangerous.

At the dais, an imperial PROCONSUL slams a scroll onto the podium.

PROCONSUL
(booming)
Grain riots in Alexandria. Border
revolts in Dacia. Discontent
festers like a plague!

A rustle of anxious voices.

SENATOR VARRO (60s, heavysset, bitter) rises from his seat.

SENATOR VARRO
(hissing)
And yet we spend fortunes parading
women with swords before the mob!
What rot have we become?

Muted applause from scattered senators.

Across the chamber, another senator, YOUNG MARCUS (30s, ambitious) leans toward an elder conspirator.

YOUNG MARCUS
(whispering)
The gods will not save Domitian.
Nor will his beasts. Rome tires of
his games.

The elder nods grimly.

A chilling breeze seems to sweep through the hall – though no doors are open.

EXT. PROVINCIAL LUDUS – COURTYARD – DAY

A dusty backwater training camp surrounded by crumbling walls and bored guards.

ACHILLIA, stripped of her pristine armor, now wears battered leather scraps. She slashes relentlessly at a training dummy, her eyes cold.

Nearby, brutish MALE GLADIATORS jeer at her – not out of cruelty, but weary admiration.

MALE GLADIATOR
(muttering)
I've seen tigers that fight with
less rage.

The LANISTA (new, cruel, fat) watches, calculating.

LANISTA
(to himself)
Break her... and she'll be worth
her weight in silver.

Achillia's blade strikes the dummy's head clean off.

A stunned silence.

ACHILLIA
(coldly, to no one)
Send real enemies next time.

She stalks away into the shadows of the ludus, alone.

INT. PRIVATE VILLA - AMAZON'S HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Amazon, too, is far from free.

She lies back on silken sheets – a kept champion for a drunken, lecherous PATRON and his guests.

At the edge of the room, two naked male slaves wait silently, offered to her like gifts.

The PATRON toasts with wine.

PATRON
(slurring)
Choose one! Or both! You're not
just a fighter anymore – you're an
icon! A goddess of the arena!

Amazon smiles faintly – a smile that could slice bone.

She rises, slow and lethal. Crosses the room to the slaves.

Lays a hand lightly on one young man's shoulder – so lightly he flinches.

Then Amazon turns back to the Patron.

AMAZON
(quietly)
Even gods get tired of being gawked
at.

Before the Patron can react, she slams the wine goblet into his face – CRASH.

The slaves bolt. Guards storm in.

Amazon lifts the broken stem of the goblet – a makeshift dagger – ready to fight again, no matter the odds.

EXT. BACK ALLEY – NEAR COLOSSEUM – NIGHT

Moonlight slices between crooked stone walls.

A cloaked figure hurries through the shadows – SENATOR VARRO.

He stops at a hidden doorway.

Inside – whispers. Figures in hoods. Rebels, escaped slaves, even a few off-duty Praetorian Guards sick of the madness.

The underground resistance.

Their leader – a scarred ex-centurion (VIBIUS) – speaks low.

VIBIUS

(grim)

The mob drinks blood while the
empire rots.

It's time we end the show... Start with their golden boy."

Varro hesitates.

SENATOR VARRO

(hushed)

If we fail– our heads will rot on
spikes.

Vibius grins like a wolf.

VIBIUS

"Then we die standing."

The camera follows the glint of a hidden dagger... and fades into darkness.

VINCIAL LUDUS – HOLDING CELLS – NIGHT

Achillia sits shackled in a dirt cell.

Across the bars – a half-dead gladiator slave (NUBIUS) coughs blood.

NUBIUS

(low)

Word is... the emperor falls within
the month.

Achillia leans closer.

ACHILLIA
(quiet)
Rumors get men killed.

NUBIUS
(smiling faintly)
And sometimes... they get women
free.

He slides a thin shard of metal toward her under the grime.

A lock pick.

Achillia closes her hand over it, expression unreadable.

ACHILLIA
(whisper)
Then let's carve new legends.

INT. PRIVATE VILLA - SECRET CELL - NIGHT

Torchlight flickers on rough stone walls.

Amazon is chained, stripped of armor, bloodied from unseen punishment.

A fat Roman PATRON watches her like a prized bull, sipping wine.

PATRON
(slurring)
You were to entertain... not
humiliate me in front of my peers.

Amazon glares through a swollen eye.

No fear. Only contempt.

PATRON (CONT'D)
(drunk)
No matter.
Tomorrow... you die slow.
Entertainment... final... divine.

He lurches toward her.

Amazon strains against her chains - muscles coiled like a viper.

Her lip curls in a ghost of a smile.

AMAZON

(whisper)

I hope you die screaming.

(Back to Rome – unrest growing)

EXT. TEMPLE OF MARS – NIGHT

Flames flicker under stone gods.

Graffiti sprawls across temple walls:

"ROME IS A CAGE"

"BLOOD FEEDS LIARS"

"DOMITIAN THE FALSE"

Senator Varro pulls his cloak tighter, watching shadowy figures scatter after painting the slogans.

Footsteps behind him – a Praetorian Officer (secret ally).

PRAETORIAN

(hushed)

Tonight they burned the wheat stores.

Riots by dawn.

SENATOR VARRO

(whisper)

And the emperor...?

The Praetorian smirks.

PRAETORIAN

He tightens the leash.

Tomorrow, he declares new executions.

Including senators.

Varro's hand tightens around the hidden dagger beneath his cloak.

(Achillia prepares the others for revolt)

INT. PROVINCIAL LUDUS - CELL BLOCK - LATE NIGHT

Achillia crouches by a dying brazier, whispering to a small cluster of slaves.

She draws crude lines in the dirt: the layout of the arena, the guard stations.

ACHILLIA

(quiet)

At the third horn, when the sun
blinds the south gate—
we move.

One battered girl hesitates.

SLAVE GIRL

(whisper)

If we fail...?

Achillia's voice is ice.

ACHILLIA

Then we die on our feet...
Not rotting in chains.

The slaves nod.

The first sparks of rebellion are lit.

INT. PRIVATE CELLS - VILLA DUNGEON - LATE NIGHT

Torchlight sputters low.

Amazon kneels alone, chained to a cold stone wall. Her hands bloodied from futile struggles.

A gaunt PRIEST (hooded) enters - carrying a bowl of black dye and a razor.

PRIEST

(soft, ritualistic)

All things offered to the gods must
be purified.

Amazon sneers.

AMAZON

I belong to no god.

The Priest grabs a fistful of her hair, saws it off with the razor - brutal, humiliating.

Black dye is smeared across her arms and face – marking her as condemned.

The final insult.

PRIEST

(low)

Fight well.

The vultures grow impatient.

He leaves her kneeling in the dark, stripped of even her identity.

Amazon breathes heavily – rage simmering in silence.

INT. SENATOR VARRO'S VILLA - SECRET STUDY - NIGHT

Five shadowy figures gather around a cracked marble table:

Senator Varro

Praetorian Commander Petronius

Two senior senators

One grim-faced noblewoman (Domitia?)

A tattered map of the imperial palace is spread between them.

SENATOR VARRO

(hushed)

Tomorrow at midday.

While he signs the new decrees.

PRAETORIAN COMMANDER

(flat)

His guards are bought.

His blade has been removed.

NOBLEWOMAN

(icy)

Strike swift. Strike unseen.

The flickering torchlight casts monstrous shadows across their faces.

A hand slams down onto the map.

SENATOR VARRO

(whisper)

By sunset – Rome will belong to men again.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA - PRE-DAWN

Fog blankets the crumbling arena.

Inside:

Guards yawn, playing dice.

The slaves shift uneasily, chains clinking in the dark.

Then—

A LONE HORN SOUNDS.

A second later —

A SECOND HORN.

Confused murmurs.

At the third horn—

ACHILLIA and the SLAVE GIRLS explode from the shadows.

Chains whip around guards' throats.

Hidden blades flash.

Blood splashes across ancient stone.

Achillia fights like a phantom — a blade of vengeance.

No hesitation. No mercy.

The first guards fall.

Freedom rages in their veins.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA - DAYBREAK

Cracked, half-collapsing stone bleachers.

Only a few hundred peasants and drunk nobles sit, waiting for blood.

A heavy gate CREAKS open—

Amazon stumbles out — her arms still marked with black dye. No helmet. Only a battered gladius.

Weak. Bleeding.

The crowd jeers:

PEASANT
(jeering)
Show us how gods die, wolf-woman!

Opposite her:

- A MASSIVE RETIARIUS (NET-AND-TRIDENT FIGHTER)
- A SNARLING BEAR, dragged in on chains
- Two HALF-ARMORED MALE GLADIATORS

Four against one.

A death sentence.

Amazon stands alone.

Breathes once.

Eyes burning.

And then - she roars.

She sidesteps the first gladiator's charge - stabbing low.

The net whips around her - she flips it off.

She slashes at the bear's face - the crowd gasps.

It's not a fight.

It's a war cry.

(Achillia leads the rebellion forward)

EXT. PROVINCIAL ROADS - SUNRISE

Achillia, bloodied but unbowed, leads a ragged caravan of freed slaves through the hills.

Makeshift weapons.

Stolen horses.

Flaming banners stitched from stolen cloth.

ACHILLIA
(quiet, to herself)
Carve deeper.

They vanish into the rising mist – headed toward Halicarnassus.

Toward vengeance.

(Domitian unknowingly steps into his final day)

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE – MORNING

Domitian is wrapped in silken robes, sipping watered wine, signing death warrants with casual boredom.

A COURTIER bows low, presenting new petitions.

Behind him, hidden among the servants...

Stephanus, the assassin – wearing his fake injured arm.

Domitian doesn't notice.

He signs.

The clock ticks toward midday.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA – CONTINUOUS

Amazon staggers, blood running down her arm.

One male gladiator lies twitching in the dust. The retiarius' net hangs shredded from the bear's claws.

The crowd SCREAMS – half cheering, half outraged.

From the imperial box, a fat official waves his hand – thumbs down.

EXECUTION.

Two new fighters storm from the gate.

Amazon plants her feet, refusing to fall.

Behind her – the dying bear lunges one last time, dragging a chain.

Chaos erupts.

Dust. Roaring. Blood.

Through the haze–

Achillia arrives, cloaked and armed.

Their eyes meet across the sand.

Reinforcements flood the stands – Achillia's rebel slaves, disguised as spectators, attack the guards.

The arena explodes into full-scale rebellion.

EXT. CITY STREETS – LATE AFTERNOON

Fires burn across Halicarnassus.

Citizens riot.

Statues of Domitian are toppled.

Gladiator slaves break free from their chains.

A mob of rebels swarms the Senate Hall, tearing down imperial banners.

The city teeters on collapse – and Domitian doesn't even know yet.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA – BURNING SANDS – CONTINUOUS

Flames crackle along the arena walls.

Slaves riot through the stands.

Gladiators arm themselves with real steel.

Amazon swings a blood-slick sword, cutting down a charging guard.

Achillia moves like a shadow beside her – precise, lethal, unstoppable.

AMAZON
(grinning through blood)
You took your time.

ACHILLIA
(deadpan)
I was betting on you.

They fight back-to-back – a perfect, brutal dance. A shield shatters. A spear snaps. Blood mists the smoke.

From the upper tunnel – MORE IMPERIAL GUARDS storm down.

Too many.

Achillia grabs Amazon's wrist – yanking her toward the tunnel.

ACHILLIA (CONT'D)
(urgent)
We carve deeper.

Amazon bares her teeth – a battle cry ripped from her soul.

Together they charge into the smoke.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE – PRIVATE STRATEGY ROOM – SAME TIME

Marble maps scattered across tables.

Scrolls of battles. Provinces. Grain shipments.

The EMPEROR'S ADVISOR (rat-faced, panicked) rushes in.

ADVISOR
(blurting)
The Eastern provinces...
Alexandria... Carthage... They're
rioting.

Domitian, seated on a gold-inlaid chair, slowly sips wine – utterly calm.

DOMITIAN
(cold)
Then send more blood.

ADVISOR
(whispering, terrified)
My lord... the gladiators. The ones
you spared... they live.

A long, cold silence.

Domitian finally sets down his goblet.

DOMITIAN
(flat)
Mercy is weakness.
Weakness... is treason.

He signals. Two PRAETORIAN GUARDS drag the advisor away screaming.

EMPRESS (LEANING IN, SLY)
Perhaps it is not the women who are
dangerous.
It is the story they leave behind.

Domitian tightens his grip on the goblet until it cracks.

DOMITIAN
(whispering)
Then we erase them both.

EXT. DESERT TRAINING GROUNDS - DUSK

A brutal wasteland outside the lesser arena.

Dust storms swirl. Broken weapons litter the sand. No
audience. No glory.

AMAZON, shackled to others, drags a massive sled weighted
with stones. She strains - muscles trembling - refusing to
fall.

Nearby, low-ranking soldiers bet on which prisoner collapses
first.

GUARD
(calling out)
Ten denarii the wolf bitch snaps
her spine before sunset!

Amazon hears them. Bites back a snarl. Keeps pulling.

At the edge of the field, an OLD SLAVE WOMAN drops a tiny
scrap of cloth - RED - barely visible in the sand.

Amazon's eyes flicker toward it. Message received.

She stumbles... drops to one knee... grabs the cloth in a
fistful of dirt. Tucks it into her bindings.

A coded message. Freedom is stirring.

INT. DANK HOLDING CELLS - OTHER SIDE OF THE CITY - NIGHT

ACHILLIA sits alone, sharpening a stolen dagger.

A RAT scurries past. She lets it go - watching it disappear
through a crack in the stone wall.

A soft knock at her barred window. A young SERVANT BOY slips
a folded note through the iron grate.

Achillia reads:

"Blood Moon Rises. Wolves Must Run."

She smiles grimly. Tucks the dagger into her boot. Stands – ready.

EXT. HALICARNASSUS SLUMS – NIGHT

Quick flashes:

Graffiti being painted hurriedly – a wolf and a blade crossed under a blood moon.

Coins exchanged in dark alleyways.

Merchants, thieves, and slaves whispering code words under their breath.

The rebellion – the legend – is building.

And Amazon and Achillia – apart – are still somehow moving toward the same storm.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DESERTED SHRINE – OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY – MIDNIGHT

An abandoned shrine to forgotten gods.

Cracked stone pillars.

A crumbling altar drowned in moonlight.

A red-tinted full moon hangs heavy overhead – the Blood Moon.

ACHILLIA waits in the shadows, dagger hidden at her side.

FOOTSTEPS.

From the darkness – AMAZON emerges, cloak torn, blood crusted down one arm.

Alive. Fierce.

For a long moment – neither speaks.

Just the wind.

Finally–

AMAZON
 (gravelly)
 You got uglier.

ACHILLIA
 (smiling slightly)
 You got slower.

A beat.

ACHILLIA (CONT'D)
 (serious now)
 Why summon me?

AMAZON tosses the red cloth at her feet – the signal.

AMAZON
 (quiet)
 They think we are broken.
 That we rot alone.

Achillia kneels, fingers brushing the dirt.

ACHILLIA
 They're wrong.

From the shadows, a few OTHERS emerge – battered gladiators, slaves, a disfigured ex-soldier.

Not an army. But a spark.

ACHILLIA (CONT'D)
 (eyeing them)
 This isn't rebellion.
 It's suicide.

AMAZON
 (stepping closer)
 Everything after the arena is
 suicide.
 At least this way, we carve our own
 epitaph.

Achillia studies her.

A long beat.

Then–

ACHILLIA
 (softly)
 One last fight.

They clasp forearms – warriors' bond.

Above them – the Blood Moon watches.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SUPPLY CARAVAN ROAD - PRE-DAWN

A lonely dirt road winds through rocky hills. A pair of Roman supply wagons– loaded with food, weapons, and coins – trundle toward the city, guarded by half-asleep SOLDIERS.

From a bluff above–

AMAZON and ACHILLIA crouch with a handful of REBELS.

Crude weapons. Torn cloaks. No armor.

ACHILLIA

(low)

One cart feeds a city.
Two feeds a rebellion.

AMAZON

(grinning)

Let's feast.

Without ceremony– Amazon hurls a torch down onto the road.

The brush explodes into FLAMES – forcing the caravan to screech to a halt.

The soldiers scramble.

Before they can react– Amazon and Achillia CHARGE down the slope, leading their ragged fighters.

Steel flashes.

Shouts. Blood. Panic.

Amazon barrels into a Roman guard – breaking his shield arm with a brutal shoulder slam. Achillia moves like a ghost – blade slicing tendons, tripping a panicked horse to block the road.

It's not a battle – It's a raid.

In minutes – the Romans are either dead, fleeing, or stripped.

The rebels haul away sacks of supplies into the hills before the next patrol can find them.

EXT. DESERT SHRINE - DAWN

The rebels tear into the stolen bread and wine like wolves.
Amazon and Achillia stand apart - already thinking ahead.

ACHILLIA

(quiet)

Today, we fed them.
Tomorrow... we'll arm them.

AMAZON

(staring into the
sunrise)

And the day after that.
Rome remembers we existed.

Their faces glow blood-red in the rising light.

The Blood Moon fades, but the rebellion has begun.

FADE OUT.

INT. IMPERIAL STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

A dark marble chamber. Maps of the provinces sprawled across
a massive table. Miniature figurines - lions, gladiators,
soldiers - positioned like a twisted game.

DOMITIAN paces, RAGE barely contained.

ADVISOR (TREMBLING)

The grain riots worsen, my lord.
The loss of the caravans..." (beat)
...they chant Achillia's and
Amazon's names.

The Empress lounges nearby, amused - sipping wine.

DOMITIAN

Two gutter whores steal my glory?
Steal my peace?

He SLAMS his hand onto the table - sending figurines flying.

DOMITIAN (CONT'D)

(spitting venom)

Flood the arenas.
Double the crucifixions. Silence
the streets with blood if we must!

The Advisor bows so low his nose nearly brushes the floor.

EMPEROR DOMITIAN
 (half to himself)
 No mercy. No surrender.

He stares at a small carving of Amazon and Achillia on the table – Then grinds it to dust beneath his ringed fist.

EMPRESS
 (softly, almost singing)
 The gods give glory...
 And they take it away.

Domitian's jaw tightens.

He smells the end—but will fight it tooth and nail.

EXT. HALICARNASSUS - CITY STREETS - SUNSET

A blood-red sky. Smoke rises from distant fires.

Imperial GUARDS, armed to the teeth, storm the poorer districts. Kicking in doors. Dragging men and women into the streets.

A VENDOR is beaten down for selling "blasphemous" charms of Amazon and Achillia. A PRIESTESS is seized for preaching that the gladiatrices were "chosen by the gods." A group of CHILDREN cry as their father is hauled away in chains.

GUARD CAPTAIN
 (raising a scroll)
 By order of Caesar Domitian –
 sedition is death!

Screams. Weeping. Shackles. Fires.

EXT. SMALL SHRINE - CONTINUOUS

At a crumbling shrine to the goddess Victoria, a secret carving: AMAZON and ACHILLIA, etched side by side.

A tearful old woman lights a tiny oil lamp beneath it.

Before she can finish her prayer – A spear drives into the ground beside her.

GUARD (O.S.)
 No gods but Rome.

He smashes the carving with his boot.

The flames rise higher over the city.

INT. HOLDING CELLS - PROVINCIAL ARENA - NIGHT

A narrow stone corridor. Chains rattle. Water drips from the ceiling.

AMAZON sits slumped in the shadows, arms shackled above her head. Her face battered. Her spirit – not broken.

A NEW PRISONER (20s, gaunt, terrified) is shoved into the next cell.

AMAZON
(low, hoarse)
What city burns?

The prisoner hesitates—terrified to speak.

NEW PRISONER
(whispering)
Halicarnassus...
They say...they say the gods sent
women to defy Caesar. And now he
burns the city to erase them.

Amazon's fingers curl into a fist. She closes her eyes.

Across the prison –

ACHILLIA kneels in her own cell, sharpening a shard of broken pottery against the wall. Eyes cold. Listening. She heard every word.

A slow, dangerous smile touches her lips.

ACHILLIA
(whispering to herself)
Legends die slowly.

EXT. ROMAN FORUM - DAY

The heart of the Empire. Statues loom over a restless crowd. Vendors shout over each other. Coins clatter. Beggars tug at cloaks.

Near the Senate steps, two SENATORS mutter under their breath.

SENATOR 1
(hissing)
Women in the arena. Grain riots in
the provinces.
This emperor shames Jupiter
himself.

SENATOR 2
(paranoid)
Keep your voice down.
Even the marble walls have ears.

In the distance, banners still hang—faded images of Amazon and Achillia, now torn by the wind.

Bread carts topple. Fights break out over crumbs.

SENATOR 1
(muttering)
Rome rots from the inside.

Behind them, PRAETORIAN GUARDS march in lockstep — faces blank, armor gleaming.

The streets fester with unrest... but the Senate pretends not to see.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA - DUSK

Achillia paces a filthy sandpit — smaller, cruder than Halicarnassus. The crowd here is drunker. Meaner. Throwing rotten fruit. Coins. Bones.

An ARMORED GLADIATOR (male) — twice her size — lumbers toward her with a warhammer.

She sidesteps him like smoke. Quick. Precise.

The hammer SMASHES into the sand.

Cheers. Screams.

ACHILLIA (V.O.)
(steady)
They cheer the swing.
Not the mind that dodges it.

The brute swings again — she rolls, slices his hamstring. He crumples.

The crowd boos — wanting blood. Wanting spectacle.

ACHILLIA (V.O.)
(low, defiant)
Let them starve.

She drives her sword through his gut — efficient, merciless. No roar. No pose. Just survival.

As the gate clangs shut behind her, a shadow approaches:

The new LANISTA – greedy, smirking – holding a scroll sealed in red wax.

LANISTA
 (grinning)
 Special summons.
 The Blood Moon Festival approaches.
 Rome calls.

Achillia freezes. Her knuckles whiten around her blade.

ACHILLIA
 (whispering)
 Amazon...

Her old enemy. Her old ally. Her unfinished war.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN STRONGHOLD - TWILIGHT

Far away, atop a rocky plateau, Amazon watches from a distance:

A slaver's caravan struggles up a jagged trail – hauling cages of women and boys. Fresh blood for the arenas.

Amazon's fists tighten around a jagged blade.

Beside her – a handful of escaped gladiators, faces grim.

One of them – TYRUS (40s), scarred veteran – growls low:

TYRUS "If we strike, they'll double the bounty on your head."

AMAZON
 (staring at the cages)
 Let them.
 We carve deeper.

She turns. Steel in her voice.

AMAZON (CONT'D)
 Gather the others.
 Tonight, we cut free.

Her eyes glint with fire.

For once, she fights not for bread –

But for vengeance.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - STRATEGY CHAMBER - NIGHT

Torchlight burns low over a sprawling marble table littered with maps, festival plans, and wagers.

DOMITIAN stands at the head of the table - silent, brooding.

The EMPRESS lounges nearby, lazily sipping honeyed wine.

ADVISORS and SENATORS murmur anxiously.

SENATOR VARRO

(whispering)

Female duels... blood sacrifices...
Rome teeters on the edge of
scandal, my lord.

DOMITIAN

(cold smile)

Then let it fall.
As long as it falls roaring.

The Empress smiles - proud of her monster.

An ADVISOR nervously unrolls a scroll - an official edict.

ADVISOR

By imperial decree...
A Blood Moon Festival.
Women will fight women.
Women will fight beasts.
No mercy.
No surrender.

Domitian steps closer to the table - looming.

DOMITIAN

(soft)

And if they defy us?

The Empress's voice, soft as silk:

EMPRESS

(smiling)

Then we end their myths... with
fire.

Domitian nods once.

A massive blood-red seal - the Emperor's insignia - is stamped onto the scroll.

THUMP.

Final.

Over this:

QUICK CUTS – "BLOOD MOON PREPARATIONS" MONTAGE:

BANNERS bearing Amazon and Achillia's likenesses unfurled across cities.

SLAVES hammering new iron cages.

PRIESTS anointing gladiator blades with "sacred" animal blood.

BETTING STALLS filling with gold coins and desperate gamblers.

RUMORS swirling in smoky taverns:

"Two warrior queens – destined to kill each other under a cursed moon."

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE – DOMITIAN'S PRIVATE CHAMBER – NIGHT

A dimly lit room, heavy with incense smoke.

Domitian sits alone at a marble table, wine untouched. A PRIVATE SCRIBE quietly reads a list of "unrest" reports: food riots, rumors of rebellion, whispered dissent in the Senate.

SCRIBE

(low, trembling)

The grain shortage worsens. The senators murmur... and there are those who whisper of change.

Domitian stares into the shadows – cold, calculating.

DOMITIAN

Change is a knife they lack the courage to wield.

He taps the table rhythmically – slow, deliberate. Thinking.

DOMITIAN (CONT'D)

The mob cheers for bread and blood...

(smirking)

Until they demand more than either.

A distant clang echoes from somewhere in the palace – like a dropped blade.

Domitian doesn't flinch. But his knuckles whiten around the goblet in his hand.

DOMITIAN (CONT'D)
 (double-edged)
 Let them sharpen their knives.
 (beat)
 I'll sharpen mine first.

FADE OUT.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA – HOLDING PENS – NIGHT

Moonlight slices through iron bars.

AMAZON sits in a cramped cell with a handful of battered, terrified fighters – women and girls barely clinging to life.

A bruised YOUNG WOMAN (16) clutches a broken spear shaft.

YOUNG WOMAN
 (whispering)
 They'll feed us to the lions at dawn.

AMAZON
 (quiet but fierce)
 Only if we let them.

The guards laugh beyond the bars – drunk, distracted by the Blood Moon festivities starting in the main square.

Amazon's eyes glint.

She subtly twists the rusted shackle on her wrist – loosening it.

She glances to the others.

AMAZON (CONT'D)
 (low)
 When the drums start...
 ...run.

The others blink – stunned. Hope. Dangerous, stupid hope.

The guards aren't paying attention.

A loud DRUMROLL begins in the distance – celebrations starting.

Amazon rips free the shackle with a snap of her wrist.

She lunges forward – driving the broken chain into a GUARD'S throat.

The man gurgles, collapses.

Chaos erupts.

Women SCREAM, scrambling through the open pens.

Amazon barrels through the breach, grabbing a fallen sword.

Another guard rushes her – CLANG – she slams his helmet sideways.

She fights like a storm – brutal, raw, efficient.

In the chaos, several women flee into the night – shadows against torches and banners.

But–

From the main gate, ARMORED RIDERS surge in – imperial reinforcements.

Amazon turns to face them.

Blood dripping down her forearms.

Alone now.

She doesn't run.

She squares her shoulders.

Readies her blade.

Eyes blazing.

As the cavalry charges –

INT. TEMPLE OF MARS - NIGHT

The sanctum is lit by hundreds of flickering oil lamps. Heavy incense chokes the air. Shadows twist along the walls – gods carved in brutal relief.

ACHILLIA kneels at the center of a blood-stained altar.

Around her: high priests, noblewomen, and imperial advisors murmur prayers – not for her salvation, but for spectacle.

An aged PRIESTESS, face veiled in crimson, marks Achillia's bare shoulders with sacrificial ash.

PRIESTESS
 (intoning)
 The gods favor the steel...
 ...bathed in its sister's blood."

Achillia's hands clench into fists – the ash smears.

She stares up at the ceiling – expression cold, detached.

High above, a massive mosaic depicts Mars – god of war – devouring his own sons.

A golden collar is produced – gleaming, heavy.

The Empress watches from a balcony above, sipping wine.

EMPRESS
 (lazily)
 Crown the beast.

Two attendants clamp the collar around Achillia's throat.

It's more shackle than adornment.

The priestess raises a blade – scratches a shallow cut across Achillia's forehead.

Blood trickles down her face.

The gathered nobles cheer – treating her humiliation as blessing.

Achillia breathes slowly.

ACHILLIA (V.O.)
 They call this honor.
 They call this faith. I call it
 debt.

Her eyes burn – not with fear, but with calculation.

Off to the side, an imperial artist sketches furiously – preserving the scene for propaganda.

Achillia is no longer a fighter.

She's becoming a symbol – a weapon sharpened by Rome's hunger for spectacle.

A final beat–

The priests finish the ritual.

Chains are shackled to Achillia's wrists.

The Empress nods, satisfied.

EMPRESS
(softly, to herself)
Now bleed prettily, darling.

The guards haul Achillia to her feet – dragging her toward the waiting arena.

Her bare feet leave bloody footprints across the marble floor.

INT. SECRET CHAMBER – IMPERIAL SENATE – NIGHT

A low fire crackles in a brazier. Shadows flicker against cracked marble columns.

Seven SENATORS sit in a rough circle – aged, robed, and bitter.

Outside, RAIN pelts the streets of Rome – a fitting backdrop.

SENATOR TULLIUS VARRO (60s), sharp-eyed and dangerous, leans forward.

VARRO
(whispering)
He's not a god. He's not immortal.
He's just a man... bald, spiteful,
alone.

The others murmur agreement – cautious, fearful.

SENATOR LENTULUS (fat, sweating) dabs his forehead with a silk cloth.

LENTULUS
(whispering)
And still the crowds love him.
He bathes them in blood and bread.

VARRO
(leaning closer)
Then we sharpen their appetite.
We let them feast... until they
choke.

He slams a dagger onto the table – the blade quivers upright.

A bold move. A dangerous one.

The others glance nervously toward the locked door.

VARRO (CONT'D)

(low)

We cut out the rot – before it
spreads to the bone.

A beat.

SENATOR CORNELIUS (30s, ambitious) finally speaks.

CORNELIUS

And who wields the blade?

Silence.

Varro smiles thinly.

VARRO

Leave that to me.

He blows out the brazier – plunging the chamber into
darkness.

The conspiracy is born.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA – MIDDAY

The sun BEATS DOWN on a dusty, half-crumbled arena somewhere
in the provinces – a ghost of Rome's grandeur.

The CROWD here is rougher. Dirtier. Farmers. Mercenaries.
Traders. Cutthroats. They don't chant names – they scream for
death.

At the center of the arena, AMAZON kneels in shackles –
breathing hard.

Her once-proud armor is mismatched junk now. Dented.
Bloodied.

The local LANISTA (ugly, missing teeth) stands over her,
laughing.

LANISTA

(to the crowd)

Once a goddess of Rome!
Now a whore for your amusement!

The mob HOWLS.

From the opposite gate— a MASSIVE BERSERKER (brutish Thracian) storms into the arena. Two axes. No armor. All rage.

The slave-handlers UNCHAIN Amazon and shove a rusty gladius into her hand.

She doesn't flinch.

Her eyes lock on the berserker — pure fury burning under her cracked skin.

The drums beat faster.

The lanista raises his hands, grinning—

LANISTA (CONT'D)
Let the bitch bleed!

A HORN BLARES.

The berserker charges — axes whirling.

Amazon sidesteps — barely — the first swing. Dust explodes around her.

Second swing — she ducks low, rolls, comes up snarling.

The crowd roars. They can smell the blood coming.

Amazon feints left— slashes right— the gladius tears into the berserker's side.

He HOWLS — but grabs her wrist mid-strike.

Lifts her — HURLS her across the sand.

She lands HARD, gasping.

The berserker charges again — but Amazon scrambles to her knees, grabs a broken spear shaft from the ground—

As he raises his axes for the killing blow—

SHE RAMS the broken shaft straight up under his ribs.

The berserker convulses — his own momentum impaling him deeper.

Blood sprays.

He collapses on top of her, dead weight pinning her down.

The arena goes SILENT for a heartbeat.

Then ERUPTS.

Amazon struggles out from under the corpse. Blood dripping.
Muscles trembling.

She raises her broken shaft high – a defiant salute.

The mob goes wild – fists pounding, mouths screaming.

But there's no laurel crown. No reward.

Only survival.

She limps back toward the slave gate – disappearing into shadow.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE – GRAND FEAST HALL – NIGHT

Torchlight flickers across golden walls, silk banners, and drunken nobility.

Music plays – flutes and lyres – but it's wild, discordant, almost mocking.

At the center of the feast: A raised dais, strewn with velvet and spilled wine.

ACHILLIA stands there – forced into gilded armor that fits too tight, too showy – nothing like her real battle gear.

Chains of thin gold bind her wrists – not heavy enough to restrain, but enough to humiliate.

Noblemen and women in decadent costumes lounge around, laughing, pointing.

Their faces are painted with powdered blush and heavy kohl, mocking the gods they pretend to worship.

DOMITIAN sits at the head of the feast – bored, swirling wine in his goblet.

An ANNOUNCER (effeminate, cruel) claps his hands for attention.

ANNOUNCER

(gleeful)

Behold! Rome's own goddess of
blood!
Achillia the Undefeated!

Laughter.

The announcer tosses a wooden sword at her feet.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Defend yourself, mighty goddess!

A huge drunken senator lumbers forward, brandishing a blunt practice spear.

The crowd CHEERS.

Achillia's face is stone. No rage. No fear.

The senator charges – clumsy, slipping on spilled wine.

Achillia sidesteps – slams the senator face-first into a column without even picking up the sword.

The crowd howls with laughter.

Domitian cracks a faint smile.

DOMITIAN
(murmuring)
The puppet dances after all.

The Empress watches from her cushioned seat – sipping wine, her eyes narrowed in something like pity... or calculation.

The feast spins on.

As Achillia stands alone – gilded, shackled, humiliated – the music rising like a twisted hymn around her.

EXT. PROVINCIAL ARENA – NIGHT

A filthy, crumbling arena under a blood-red moon.

The crowd is rowdier, poorer, more violent than anything Amazon has seen before.

AMAZON stands in the center – battered, armor cracked, blood drying on her skin.

Across from her:

Three male gladiators – bruised but cocky – circle her like jackals.

The crowd bays for blood.

Slaves toss coins into pits, betting how long she'll last.

The ANNOUNCER (hoarse, drunk) waves a rag.

ANNOUNCER

Three-to-one odds! Will the wolf-
bitch survive?

Amazon's gladius hangs low in her hand.

Her breath shallow. Her eyes – hollow.

The first gladiator rushes.

Amazon side-steps – rips his hamstring with a single brutal swipe.

He collapses SCREAMING.

The second one hesitates –

Amazon grabs a handful of sand – throws it into his face –
and buries her blade in his throat.

The third – bigger, armored – charges with a massive hammer.

The arena rumbles with the crowd's drunken glee.

Amazon lets him come – stepping into his swing – taking the
blow on her shattered shoulder – and using the momentum to
drive her dagger deep under his ribcage.

He falls with a wet gasp.

SILENCE.

Amazon stands over the three corpses – blood-soaked, barely
breathing – and raises her blade toward the crowd.

Her voice is hoarse but defiant.

AMAZON

You wanted blood?

She drops the sword.

AMAZON (CONT'D)

Drink it yourselves.

She turns and walks away, leaving the bodies behind.

The crowd ROARS – half in rage, half in awe.

EXT. ARENA HOLDING CELLS - LATER

Amazon slumps against a crumbling wall.

Every muscle screams. Every wound throbs.

A guard spits at her feet.

GUARD

You'll dance better next time,
savage.

Amazon lifts her bloodied hand, middle finger raised -
defiant even as she fades into unconsciousness.

FADE OUT.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - STRATEGY CHAMBER - NIGHT

Marble columns loom like ghostly sentries. The room is half-
lit, smoky, claustrophobic.

DOMITIAN sits at a long table - Alone. Hunched. Eyes
bloodshot.

Scrolls, maps, and reports are scattered before him - all
ignored.

He stares blankly at a small carved figurine of AMAZON,
placed near his wine goblet.

The doors open.

In slinks his ADVISOR - sweaty, wringing his hands.

ADVISOR

(low, cautious)

My lord... there are murmurs in the
Senate. Rumors that the people
cheer... not Rome... but the
gladiatrices.

Domitian's knuckles whiten.

DOMITIAN

They cheer because I allow them to.

A beat.

ADVISOR

And... because they are stars now,
my lord. Names whispered even
beyond the empire's borders.

Domitian's jaw tightens. A tic pulses in his cheek.

DOMITIAN

They're nothing without me.

The Advisor hesitates, then slides a parchment across the table – a list of bets, graffiti reports, songs being sung in the streets.

Domitian reads.

His hand trembles.

One scribbled phrase catches his eye: "Achillia for Senate! Amazon for Emperor!"

Domitian's face goes stone cold.

DOMITIAN (CONT'D)

(quiet, lethal)

Tomorrow... they die.

The Advisor bows deeply, backing away.

ADVISOR

As you command, Emperor.

As he leaves, the Advisor glances back – Domitian is still staring at the figurine.

The Emperor reaches for his dagger... And slashes the figurine apart, splintering it across the marble floor.

The sound echoes like a death knell.

FADE OUT.

INT. LUDUS – ACHILLIA'S CELL – NIGHT

A single oil lamp flickers weakly. The walls are scarred from fists and blades. The floor is dusty, blood-stained.

ACHILLIA sits cross-legged on the cold stone.

Calm. Still. Focused.

In front of her: Her gladius. Her helmet. A thin strip of white linen – a final sash.

She methodically binds her wrist – a quiet, sacred ritual.

Her ribs are still bruised. Her lip split.

But her eyes? Sharp as steel.

ACHILLIA (V.O.)
 (whispered, resolute)
 Born chained.
 Dying free.

She lifts the helmet slowly – Pauses – Then lowers it onto her head.

EXT. LUDUS TRAINING PIT – SIMULTANEOUS

Moonlight spills across the empty sand.

Standing alone – helmet on – AMAZON tests the weight of her sword. Slow, brutal movements. Each swing a vow.

At the edge of the pit, the LANISTA watches.

Silent. Almost reverent.

LANISTA
 (soft)
 They'll feast on your bones...
 Or carve your names into the sky.

Amazon doesn't answer. She drives her blade into the ground – deep – and leaves it standing there like a gravestone.

Two warriors. Two paths.

One night left.

FADE OUT.

EXT. COLOSSEUM – DAWN

The sky is red with sunrise. Torches still burn along the massive walls. The Colosseum looms like a wounded beast, waiting for its final kill.

INT. HOLDING CELLS – MORNING

Amazon and Achillia – separately – are prepared by attendants.

Their ceremonial armor gleams. Faces painted. Eyes hard.

The crowd's roar above them – distant but rising – like a volcano before eruption.

INT. IMPERIAL BOX - CONTINUOUS

Domitian stands stiffly, robes immaculate, crown heavy on his brow.

The EMPRESS lounges behind him, sipping wine, her gaze sharp and amused.

Domitian's ADVISOR approaches, whispering urgently:

ADVISOR
 (low, urgent)
 The Senate grows restless.
 The Guard mutters. Even the
 priests—

DOMITIAN
 (cutting him off)
 They'll feast on blood today.
 And remember who fed them.

He grips the golden railing, knuckles white.

EXT. COLOSSEUM - ARENA FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The gates grind open.

Amazon emerges first — her war paint streaked like blood tears, armor gleaming under the rising sun.

The crowd ROARS.

From the opposite gate — Achillia steps into the light.

Cold. Precise. Every muscle honed to lethal sharpness.

INT. IMPERIAL BOX - CONTINUOUS

Domitian watches, unblinking. His hand tight around his goblet.

The Empress leans forward, smiling like a cat at a feast.

BACK TO ARENA
 FLOOR

The two women approach each other. Swords drawn. Shields up.

No ceremony. No salutes. No gods.

Just survival.

The drums pound faster.

The crowd's chant builds:

CROWD (O.S.)
A-MA-ZON! A-CHILL-IA!
A-MA-ZON! A-CHILL-IA!

A horn blares.

They CHARGE.

Steel meets steel – the clash ECHOES off the stone walls.

It is brutal. It is personal.

Not an exhibition.

Not a spectacle.

A reckoning.

EXT. COLOSSEUM – ARENA FLOOR – CONTINUOUS

Amazon swings low – Achillia leaps back, counters with a slash across Amazon's shoulder.

Blood spatters the sand.

Amazon growls – pivots – drives her shield into Achillia's ribs.

They fall into a vicious clinch – knees, fists, blades flashing.

INT. IMPERIAL BOX – CONTINUOUS

Domitian SMIRKS. The Empress watches coolly, calculating.

SENATOR TULLIUS VARRO (60s) leans toward an advisor, whispering:

SENATOR VARRO
(quiet, sharp)
While the mob screams for blood,
the Senate sharpens its daggers.

The advisor nods grimly.

In the distance – hidden eyes watch Domitian.

Whispers. A conspiracy breathing beneath the marble.

BACK TO THE
ARENA

Amazon ducks a slash – lunges – shoulder-checks Achillia hard into the sand.

Achillia scrambles up, blood in her teeth, laughing – a feral sound.

ACHILLIA
(taunting)
Is that all the wolf has left?

Amazon grins – blood running down her brow.

AMAZON
The wolf isn't done hunting yet.

They clash again – harder, faster.

The crowd is rabid now – coins, banners, broken goblets raining from the stands.

QUICK FLASHES:

– A boy clutching a wooden sword, screaming Amazon's name. –
A noblewoman swooning into her lover's arms. – A priestess
secretly drawing a small cross in the sand with her toe.

Rome – the sacred and profane – pulsing as one.

EXT. ARENA – STANDOFF – MOMENTS LATER

Both women circle – slower now.

Exhausted. Bleeding. Breathing ragged.

One mistake would end it.

The crowd leans forward as one.

Silence descends – thick and waiting.

Amazon grips her gladius tighter.

Achillia tightens her shield.

A final charge brews between them.

EXT. COLOSSEUM - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Dust curls around their feet.

Amazon and Achillia circle. Weapons trembling in their fists.
Every breath a labor.

Suddenly - They lunge at the same time.

Steel screams against steel.

Amazon feints left - pivots - SLAMS the flat of her blade
into Achillia's side.

Achillia staggers - but spins - lands a vicious elbow into
Amazon's jaw.

They collapse into the sand - Rolling, grappling - like
wolves locked in a death embrace.

Above them, the crowd shrieks in bloodlust.

INT. IMPERIAL BOX - CONTINUOUS

Domitian leans forward.

His knuckles whitening on the marble railing.

DOMITIAN

(hissing)

No surrender. No mercy.

The Empress - calm, amused - sips her wine.

EMPRESS

(whispering)

Blood alone won't save you now,
beloved.

In the shadows behind them - Senators exchange loaded
glances. Whispers coil like snakes.

EXT. COLOSSEUM - ARENA FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Amazon mounts Achillia - blade raised - Achillia grabs
Amazon's wrist - straining.

Sand sticks to sweat-slicked bodies.

A heartbeat- A single instant frozen in time.

ACHILLIA
 (barely audible)
 Make it matter.

Amazon's eyes flash.

Instead of striking – She slams her gladius into the sand beside Achillia's head.

A refusal.

A revolution.

The crowd gasps – and then ERUPTS.

CROWD
 MISSIO!
 MISSIO!
 MISSIO!

The chant rolls like a storm over the amphitheater.

INT. IMPERIAL BOX – CONTINUOUS

Domitian's face hardens.

A choice: crush the women and lose the people. Or grant mercy – and feed their legend.

The Empress leans close, murmuring:

EMPRESS
 (grim)
 A dead god cannot be worshipped.

Domitian closes his eyes – a tremor of rage.

Then – He lifts his hand.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 (shouting, breaking)
 MISSIO... GRANTED!

EXT. COLOSSEUM – ARENA FLOOR – CONTINUOUS

Trumpets blare. Drums thunder.

Amazon collapses beside Achillia, both gasping for air.

Survivors.

Icons.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - NIGHT

A torch-lit corridor.

Silent.

A group of SENATORS moves like a black tide - hooded, cloaked.

At the center:

PARTHENIUS (50s, CHAMBERLAIN, NERVOUS SWEAT ON HIS BROW)

and STEPHANUS (30s, steward, his arm bound in a false sling).

They whisper fiercely:

PARTHENIUS

(urgent)

Tonight. Before the blood gods
demand more than sport.

STEPHANUS

(checking the blade
hidden under his robe)

It must be clean. Public anger is
fickle.

PARTHENIUS

The mob worships the spectacle.
We'll give them a better one.

STEPHANUS

(grim)

A god... dying like a man.

They reach a heavy door - the Emperor's private chambers.

They exchange one last glance.

Nod.

Push inside.

INT. DOMITIAN'S PRIVATE STUDY - SAME

Domitian sits alone, scratching decrees into wax tablets.

Piles of scrolls clutter his desk.

He looks up - Sees Stephanus limping forward, "injured."

DOMITIAN
(impatient)
What now?

Stephanus lowers his head, offering a scroll.

Domitian grabs it – starts to read.

That's when– Stephanus lunges.

A dagger flashes – sinks into Domitian's groin.

Domitian roars – hurls the table aside – tries to fight – But blood pours freely.

Another blade – from Parthenius's freedman, Maximus – STABS into Domitian's side.

More conspirators rush in – Clodianus, Satur – A frenzy of knives.

Seven wounds.

Domitian collapses – gasping, clawing at the marble – Eyes wild with disbelief.

The room spins.

Blood pools.

The Emperor dies at midday – just as the omens foretold.

EXT. AN EMPTY ARENA – DAWN

Years later.

The once-roaring amphitheater lies in silence. Weeds creep through cracked stone. Banners rot and flap weakly in the cold breeze.

In the center of the abandoned sand: Two broken swords, rusted and half-buried.

FOOTSTEPS echo faintly.

A robed SCRIBE (60s), hunched and weathered, walks the deserted arena floor. He carries a worn scroll tucked beneath his arm.

The scribe kneels at the broken swords. Brushes sand from the hilts – revealing faint engravings:

AMAZON

ACHILLIA
He unrolls the scroll:

A story. Their story.

SCRIBE (V.O.)
(soft, reverent)
Some say they were sold to distant
sands...

Others say they vanished into legend... (wistful) But when
the gods turned their faces away from Rome... It was their
names the stones remembered.

The scribe places the scroll between the swords.

Wind catches it, lifting it briefly – fluttering like a
spirit – before it settles in the sand.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. ROME – DAWN

Word spreads like wildfire.

Domitian – Dead.

The Flavian dynasty– Ended in blood.

Nerva is declared Emperor within hours – old, frail, a puppet
for the Senate.

The people riot.

Factions battle in the streets.

Old graffiti praising Domitian is scraped away.

New slogans appear:

"THE GOD WHO BLED."

EXT. PROVINCIAL TOWN – DUSTY MARKET – DAY

A hot, dusty crossroads miles from Rome's poisoned heart.

Amazon, draped in a worn cloak, watches a crowd swarm a tattered notice board.

A herald reads aloud:

HERALD
(shouting)
Domitian – slain! The tyrant bled
like any man!
Rome crowns Nerva! Let the games
end– let the old gods die!

The crowd erupts – some in cheers, others in fear.

Amazon's jaw tightens.

She turns – vanishes into the throng.

Gone like smoke.

EXT. COASTAL PORT – DUSK

ACHILLIA, disguised in simple trader's robes, waits at the edge of a busy dock.

Sailors brawl over crates of grain. Vendors shout.

A ragged beggar clutches a scroll – half-singing the news:

BEGGAR
(laughing)
The wolf of Rome is dead! The gods
drink better wine tonight!

Achillia's face shows no joy.

Only grim calculation.

She steps onto a creaky merchant ship – bound for distant shores.

INT. TEMPLE RUINS – NIGHT

Crumbled stones. Fallen gods.

In the half-light, Amazon and Achillia – both cloaked, both alone – kneel before different altars in far-flung corners of the world.

Not praying.

Just breathing.

Survivors.

Legends unbroken.

EXT. BRITISH MUSEUM - DAY (FLASH FORWARD)

Modern day.

Tourists drift through a quiet gallery.

Behind glass: The same marble relief - Two female gladiators frozen in eternal combat.

AMAZON and ACHILLIA.

Their names, carved deep into stone.

A YOUNG GIRL stares up at the exhibit, wide-eyed.

MOTHER (O.S.)
(reading plaque)
They fought to a draw.
The crowd demanded mercy. Both were
spared... and then, history lost
them.

The young girl presses a hand against the glass - connecting, across centuries.

CLOSE ON the stone faces - Defiant. Eternal.

CUT TO BLACK.

BLACK SCREEN.

Superimposed text fades in:

In the years after Emperor Domitian's death, female gladiators were banned from the arenas.

Their names - and their defiance - were buried by history.

But legends do not rot with empires.

[END]

