Courage To Love

By

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EXT. CITY SKYLINE - EARLY EVENING

Earth but not the one we know. Passing through spires of Porcelain and steel reaching way into the heavens. We descend, piercing the veil of clouds.

This is Romanus the imperial capital. On this earth ancient Rome never fell. It continued on eventually spreading the entire globe, with colonies on the Moon and Mars.

VOICE
Romanus, powerful, the new capital of the Empire.

We continue down coming to a columned lined marble building. The words engraved on it’s front mantle IMPERIAL SENATE.

INT. IMPERIAL SENATE - EVENING

Continuing on into the building gliding over Senators and other staff.

VOICE
After centuries of civil war, the people finally had enough of Caesars who cared only for themselves.

Through Building we go to another chamber.

INT. IMPERIAL SENATE CHAMBER - EVENING

Rows and rows of Senate seats curved around a central throne. In it sits one man, dressed in Traditional attire, toga and Gold Laurel Crown. This is Caesar Dionitian (55)seasoned politician and loved by the people.

VOICE
The Empire was reorganized. The era of Imperial entitlement was gone. Now they are elected.

Caesar looks over documents, the general running of the government. A Routine day.

VOICE
But for all it’s outward polish there still lurked the poison which had threatened it so long ago.

Several senators are in a hot debate Caesar listens.

(CONTINUED)
VOICE
For hearts of men can be cruel, without mercy.

SENATOR
We have had more reports from the Martian colonies of this Cult Leader calling himself THE ONE.

SENATOR TWO
What the hell does that mean?

VOICE
But sometimes hearts can be changed, all we need is the courage to love.

Caesar adjusts in his chair tired and a little bored.

CAESAR
So what, he’s a little leader on that backwater colony of Mars. What possible harm can he do.

Caesar is flanked by his son MARCUS (24) sitting beside him. Even though Caesars are elected, their sons act as a back up if the Caesar dies in office or can’t fulfill his term.

Marcus is brash headstrong and really self centered. He has been pampered all his life. He knows he doesn’t live up to his Father’s expectations but tries.

MARCUS
Mars is the center of all we hold sacred. If we allow this cult to thrive it could cripple the empire.

CAESAR
As I said this is nothing, it will blow itself out. By the end of the month they’ll be worshiping something else.

Marcus settles back into chair.

CAESAR
Really Marcus, why can’t you be more like that friend of yours Trajan.

MARCUS
Trajan is a brute meant for the games.

(CONTINUED)
CAESAR
Strong runner good strategic sense.

Another Senator approaches Caesar, this is Brutus Villa (50) Trajan’s father. He and Caesar are old friends.

BRUTUS
How’s the campaign coming?

CAESAR
I think I’m good for one more term.

BRUTUS
Not if I can beat you in the outer provinces.

They share a professional laugh, they may be friends but they are political rivals.

CAESAR
How’s Trajan?

BRUTUS
Well, he scored high marks on his entrance exam to Officer Candidate School.

CAESAR
He’ll be a Centurion before you know it. To bad my son here couldn’t have tried out.

MARCUS
Only to follow in your footsteps Father.

CAESAR
That remains to be seen.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Trajan (24) walks arm in arm with Lucila (23). Trajan is tall strong, fit, a poster Child for the army. Lucila fiery red hair, petite, gorgeous. They are the world to each other, madly in love.

They walk along happy and giddy, eventually heading into a restaurant.
INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The place is packed they move through the crowd finding a vacant table. Music is blaring making it hard to hear. A waitress in retro 1950’s dress comes up to them.

WAITRESS
What’a ya have hun.

TRAJAN
Two beers, no make that a bottle of you best wine.

LUCILA
We can’t afford that.

The waitress cocks her head to one side wanting them to hurry up.

TRAJAN
Yes we can, and a large pepperoni.

LUCILA
I’ll have to work overtime.

TRAJAN
No you won’t.

Trajan pulls out a slip of paper.

TRAJAN
Officers candidate school. I’ve been accepted and given a years stipend to settle in.

Lucila overjoyed almost jumps over table giving him a huge hug kissing him all over. From across the room a very drunk Marcus watches them.

He downs another shot of whiskey then staggers over to them.

MARCUS
Hey my friends!

He almost falls all on them.

TRAJAN
We’re the ones celebrating, but it looks like you beat us to the punch.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
Cel-celebating, cel-brating. Oh fuck it, what?

LUCILA
He’s been accepted to academy.

MARCUS
That’s great, great!

The waitress comes back with wine and pizza. Marcus fumbles for his wallet almost dropping it.

MARCUS
Here dis is on me.

TRAJAN
No, No we-

MARCUS
One of the perks of being the son of Caesar. At least I can do this right.
   (beat-to waitress)
Keep da change.

WAITRESS
Thanks toots.

MARCUS
Toots, Toots I have you know I’m-

Trajan takes his arm and settles him down.

MARCUS
No fucking respect.

TRAJAN
Easy buddy, things are that bad.

MARCUS
No, you have the respect of your Father and MINE!

LUCILA
Your Father loves you. Your second only to him in the Empire.

MARCUS
Only if he dies.
TRAJAN
Hey let’s enjoy the night. Tomorrow why don’t you join me for my morning run. Your Father is usually out doing his, show him your every bit the man you can be.

LUCILA
Trajan’s right, stop wallowing in self pity and do something about it. Show him you are above the Special interest groups, use your influence to curb their power. Use your mind Marcus to get rid of them so real change can happen.

Marcus puts his arms on their shoulders. Thrilled at adoration.

MARCUS
What would I do without you? Oh and I have a little gift for you.

Marcus pulls out a diamond studded collar pin, Trajan’s name engraved on back.

TRAJAN
Oh this is too much.

MARCUS
Your worth it buddy.

They dive into pizza and pour the wine.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The three emerge from evening celebration. A luxury limousine sits waiting with two armed Praetorian guards holding door open.

MARCUS
Looks like my gilded ride is here.

TRAJAN
Government never sleeps?

MARCUS
No just the Crystal Blue chip.

TRAJAN
I never had one.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
Great stuff you can access internet and virtual worlds. Down side is they can track your movements. Can I give you a lift home?

TRAJAN
No we’d like to walk.

MARCUS
Suit yourself see ya tomorrow, nine am?

TRAJAN
Sharp.

Marcus gets in, guards close doors get in and drives off.

LUCILA
Crystal Blue?

TRAJAN
It’s something new. Government officials started using them as a safeguard against possible abduction then it evolved like internet. Like he said you can access all sorts of entertainment in your head.

LUCILA
Sounds like mind control.

TRAJAN
(laughing)
No, but it is highly addictive. I’ve seen guys retreat into their own virtual worlds not even aware of reality.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Marcus pulls out a vapor cigarette and fires it up. It’s loaded with something else. The guards smell it.

GUARD
Heroin your highness?

MARCUS
Just drive, nine am at the river.
INT. TRAJAN’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

I little one story above garage dwelling. Cramped but comfortable. Posters for join the Army and Trajan’s favorite gladiator teams. A Fat Head of one particular Gladiator RUFIO.

Trajan and Lucila open door kissing, they can’t get their clothes off fast enough. The TV is on we here a reporter.

REPORTER
And in a surprise move, Rufio king of the games has decided to retire.

TRAJAN
What?

He turns his attention to TV where a Live News Conference is taking place. Rufio big and almost Zen Like manner explains his reasons.

RUFIO
I feel the time is right. The games have become too materialistic. I mean, when you have players who sacrifice their own limbs for bionic ones just to get an edge, it’s ridiculous.

A reporter raises his hand, Rufio recognizes him.

REPORTER
But wouldn’t you say that is just all part of it. Before we had steroids and that killed people.

RUFIO
No that’s not the point, where do you separate man from machine?

REPORTER
We’ve heard rumors that men may be replaced altogether, with Battle Bots.

RUFIO
Well I’m glad I won’t be a part of that. I’ll remain with the Mars Avengers as a trainer.

Other reporters clamor for another question. Rufio waves them off and leaves the podium.

(CONTINUED)
REPORTER
There you have it, the Greatest
Gladiator of all time stepping down
out of conviction. Now a recap of
last nights game.

The TV flips to a recorded broadcast of the Mars Avengers
against Neptune’s Warriors. Twenty teams of Gladiators pair
off, they do not fight to the death. Adorned in traditional
Gladiator attire but updated with sensors and heads up
displays. Looking more like robots the swords are real, if a
player receives five touches, he’s out. The contest goes on
till only one remains and that team wins. At anytime another
player can assist their fellow teammate. Death only comes to
a player who performs too poorly in a season then the match
is to the death.

LUCILA
I hate those barbaric games.

TRAJAN
It’s just for fun these guys earn
millions.

LUCILA
What of that poor fellow last year.

TRAJAN
Cassius? Well, it happens he sucked
the past three seasons.

LUCILA
He was killed Trajan, by one of
those bionic things!

Lucila sits down on bed beside him. Trajan looks lovingly
into her eyes.

LUCILA
I’m just glad you didn’t get sucked
into all that, remember that
recruiter last fall?

TRAJAN
Old news.

LUCILA
(smiling)
Now it’s off to OCS, you’ll be a
Centurion soon.

(CONTINUED)
Continued:

TRAJAN
And from there Praetorian, and the Senate.

They laugh and coo only as lovers can excited about the future.

EXT. RIVERBANK - MORNING

Trajan looks at his watch it’s right at nine. He is punctual he has to get run in before work. Frustrated that Marcus has stood him up again, he sets off on run.

The sun beams in his face the City of Romanus sprawled out across the river. He picks up pace his heart pounding in chest. Ahead a group of Praetorian surround a jogging Caesar, moving up the trail like some weird train.

Trajan has a big smile on his face as Caesar approaches him. They slow to greet one another.

CAESAR
Trajan! OCS Congratulations!

TRAJAN
Thank you sir, how goes the election?

CAESAR
Your father is putting up a good fight.

Trajan and he laugh as the continue on their runs. Trajan watches them disappear around bend he starts back in full stride. Then BOOM!!

The explosion sends Trajan to the ground. Smoke everywhere, he gets up and runs back to check on Caesar. He moves through dust and smoke it finally clears. Body parts everywhere the Praetorian caught the brunt of the IED.

Caesar is on ground coughing up blood a large hole in his side, the wound is mortal. Trajan falls to knees.

TRAJAN
Caesar!

Caesar raises his hand to bring Trajan closer. Gurgling blood.

(Continued)
CAESAR
Do - do not let Marcus-

Then he breaths his last and dies. Trajan scared, stands he Caesars blood all over him.

A helicopter swoops in and armed guards rappel down surrounding Trajan. A Centurion, looking more like a detective, flies his car to a stop opposite and jumps out.

He looks at dead Caesar mouth agape then notices blood on Trajan.

CENTURION
What happened?!

TRAJAN
I heard an explosion, and this.

The guards move in and restrain Trajan.

TRAJAN
I know this looks bad.

CENTURION
Bring him.

INT. IMPERIAL SENATE CHAMBER - DAY

Marcus sits upon the throne looking out of place. He puts on good show of mournful son.

A Senator reads the official decree.

SENATOR
Marcus Tubulos Dionition do you assume the role of Caesar until such time an emergency vote can take place?

MARCUS
I do.

SENATOR
And Marcus Tubulos Dionitian will you relinquish those powers after said election.

MARCUS
(half smile, lying)
I do.
SENATOR
Then by the power and authority of
the Senate I declare the Caesar.

He steps back and all the Senators stand and give one arm
salute and cry out.

HAIL CAESAR!

Marcus stands.

MARCUS
I cannot fill my Father’s shoes,
but with your help we can make it
through this dark time.

INT. JAIL CELL - EVENING

Trajan still in bloody clothes sits chained to chair. An
interrogation table in front of him.

In steps the Centurion, briefcase in tow he slams it hard on
table, and sits down.

CENTURION
Okay why did you assassinate
Caesar?

TRAJAN
I didn’t!

CENTURION
Then why was this next to one of
the bomb fragments.

The Centurion pulls out plastic bag and shakes it on to
table. A small pin with his name engraved on back.

TRAJAN
That was a gift from a friend of
mine. Marcus, he gave it to me last
night.

CENTURION
This isn’t looking good for you.

TRAJAN
I don’t understand.
INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Lucila bursts through the door running up to Watch Commander.

    LUCILA
    Where’s Trajan Villa?

    WATCH COMMANDER
    He’s giving a statement, you can wait over there.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The Limousine pulls up escorted by a dozen Praetorian on motorcycles. Security is tight, Marcus is hustled inside guards surrounding him.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

He steps in with confidence everyone stops what they are doing and give one arm salute as in Senate chamber they shout out.

HAIL CAESAR!

    MARCUS
    I want to see him.

Lucila comes running up to him, a guard intervenes and restrains her.

    MARCUS
    No, its alright she’s with me.

    LUCILA
    Marcus he didn’t do this.

    MARCUS
    Shush, not now come with me.

The guards escort them back to Trajan’s cell.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

The Centurion stands and salutes as Marcus and Lucila enter.

    MARCUS
    Leave us.

(CONTINUED)
CENTURION
But sir?

MARCUS
Now!

The Centurion does as he’s told. Trajan has a pleading look on his face.

TRAJAN
Marcus you know me, I loved your Father.

MARCUS
I know, but your father’s election wasn’t going so well.

TRAJAN
You think I did this for political reasons.

Marcus sits in front of him stoically.

MARCUS
No.

LUCILA
Then you get him out of here.

MARCUS
I can’t the police have evidence and you were at the scene.

LUCILA
But your Caesar.

MARCUS
Only by Senatorial decree.

Trajan looks deep into Marcus eyes.

TRAJAN
You suspect someone else.

MARCUS
Yes, those followers of THE ONE.

LUCILA
Here?

MARCUS
We’ve heard they have factions springing up.

(CONTINUED)
TRAJAN
You manufactured my arrest.

Lucila not believing her ears.

LUCILA
What?

MARCUS
I needed someone to go to the source and flush out this character once and for all.
(beat)
I needed someone I could trust.

TRAJAN
I ought to!

MARCUS
It will be show trial. No harm will come to your family. You will go to Mars and ferret out this traitor.

TRAJAN
In the mean time, my Father’s good named will be tainted forever.

MARCUS
He will be well compensated. When you return a hero of the Empire all will be forgotten.

Trajan struggles with chains mad as hell. He screams at Marcus.

TRAJAN
Your mad Marcus, catch the real killers.

MARCUS
I’m trying to save an empire!

INT. PRISON SHIP - NIGHT

The Prison ship comes into orbit around Mars it descends through clouds. Mars has been reclaimed, it still has it’s reddish color but new oceans have formed through generations of terraform.

Trajan sits alone in handcuffs. Two pilots sit at the controls.

(CONTINUED)
TRAJAN
Could I get a little room service?

PILOT
Shut up Traitor.

Trajan shakes his head. The two pilots get up and walk back to holding area. They put on parachute bags and open bay door. Donning goggles they laugh at him.

TRAJAN
What are you doing?!

PILOT
Heard you were to be an officer.

PILOT 2
Then Pilot the ship fly boy.

They salute him and jump out laughing.

TRAJAN
Marcus!

Trajan struggles with his handcuffs. The ship is picking up speed the ground is coming up. It buffets wildly. Trajan finally maneuvers his arms from behind his back and under legs.

He runs to pilots seat looking frantically around the controls. He doesn’t know what he’s doing. He grabs steering wheel pulling back yoke.

The craft seems to stabilize a bit. Looking around at terrain. He has passed over seas and is heading into deep desert.

Miles and miles of endless sand dunes.

TRAJAN
(to himself)
Gotta land this bird. Oh shit
Trajan what are you doing?

He eases the yoke downward. He is still traveling too fast. It’s going to be an uncontrolled crash. He prays.

TRAJAN
Bless me oh God Mars.
EXT. MARS - DAY

He hits the sand with a thud the ship rolls end over end. Trajan is thrown from his seat. He hangs onto seat belt the centrifugal force has him in the air.

Looking out window he sees a cliff face coming up. Terror in his eyes. Quickly looking around, the hatch door still open.

A decision, with all his might he flings himself out just in time.

The craft pummels over the side. Trajan has managed to grab the cliff face and is dangling over a cavernous canyon.

The ship explodes below him. He pulls himself up and over.

Panting safe at last, he notices that his handcuffs have been sheared apart in the crash.

He laughs to himself and lies down resting.

Some time passes he reflects on situation, looking around.

TRAJAN
Well I passed over the sea. That’s south I think, shit.

He doesn’t think too much about it and gets up and starts walking.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

The sun is high, but it’s not real hot a strong desert breeze furls his hair.

Ahead a small dust cloud maybe humans or the Pilots!

He sees a small outcropping of stones, he hides watching.

A group of hooded people approach they are Martian Monks. Devoted to the God Mars they lead a strict warriors code.

Honor is everything to prove yourself worthy you have to pick a fight. These guys don’t play.

Trajan decides to chance it, he approaches them. He must not show fear or they’ll kill him on the spot.

They stop seeing him, their hoods hide their faces.

(CONTINUED)
MONK 1
Do you seek a challenge?

TRAJAN
No I’m lost.

MONK 2
We are all lost brother.

MONK 3
Only through the brotherhood can we be found.

MONK 1
Do you value your life?

TRAJAN
Yes.

MONK 2
Would you fight to save it.

TRAJAN
Look fellas I just want some information.

MONK 3
Those are prisoner shackles. Did you kill your jailer?

TRAJAN
No I was abandoned, my ship crashed.

MONK 1
If you tell the truth, fight to defend it.

The lead Monk throws a sword at Trajan’s feet. Trajan an Oh Crap Look!

The Lead Monk takes off robe revealing himself it’s RUFIO (38) god of the games.

Rufio assumes classic attack posture.

RUFIO
Prepare to defend yourself.

TRAJAN
No I’m your biggest fan.

He hears the unsheathing of many swords. He’s doomed any which way. He lunges for the sword.

(CONTINUED)
Rufio comes down hard but Trajan deflects it. Trajan, while smaller, is more agile. He pivots around slightly nicking Rufio on shin.

Rufio doesn’t acknowledge pain he presses the attack. Hacking and driving Trajan back.

Trajan stumbles, Rufio raises sword swinging downward.

Trajan rolls out of way jumping back to feet. Rufio astonished at his speed.

Rufio swirls around Trajan has caught him off guard. Now it’s Trajan’s turn. Rufio is now on the defensive.

Trajan is like a mad dog yelling.

TRAJAN
All I wanted was directions!

Finally one massive blow from Trajan. He knocks Rufio’s sword from his hand. Now, Trajan’s sword is at Rufio’s throat.

Rufio starts to laugh as do other Monks, they take off Robes laughing and applauding. They are all Members of the Martian Avengers team.

Trajan doesn’t know what to make of it.

RUFIO
Good work kid. Need a job.

TRAJAN
What?! Why the disguises?

The second Monk speaks he is Titus (28).

TITUS
Groupies.

RUFIO
We believe in the old order and train outside the comforts of a modern gym.

TITUS
You never know when your going to run into a fan base. Then they will follow you around like puppies.
RUFIO
Let’s get those shackles off.

TITUS
The law doesn’t really bother us out here. But better not to attract attention.

RUFIO
Come we will talk more.

EXT. DESERT – NIGHT

Trajan and others sit around an open campfire. They roast an animal they killed. It is strange looking, not a normal critter.

TRAJAN
What is that?

TITUS
We call em Dust Rats.

RUFIO
The last of the indigenous life.

TITUS
Before they reseeded Mars with earth animals.

Titus checks the meat, it’s done to his satisfaction. He portions it out to others. Trajan smells it, he doesn’t like it.

Titus and others laugh.

TITUS
It’s better than it smells.

RUFIO
High energy content.

Trajan gingerly takes a bite. A not bad look. He devours it, famished. Rufio leans back against rock relaxing.

RUFIO
You gonna tell us about it.

TRAJAN
I’m not sure if I should.

(CONTINUED)
TITUS
We really don’t care.

TRAJAN
I was accused of assassinating the Emperor.

RUFIO
Dionitian? Have they held a general election?

TRAJAN
No.

TITUS
Who replaced him.

TRAJAN
His son Marcus.

Titus almost gags on his food.

TITUS
Marcus?! That little twit.

RUFIO
So? it’s only temporary.

TITUS
I was in school with him. He used to torture animals, got a real kick out of it. He’s dangerous.

RUFIO
So he sent you here as an exile.

TRAJAN
No, he wanted me dead. The Pilots bailed out, I had to crash land the ship.

TITUS
The Gods must be with you.

TRAJAN
He told me some story about finding this Character called THE ONE.

TITUS
THE ONE?!
TRAJAN
You know him?

TITUS
What I know of him you wouldn’t believe.

Rufio understands what Titus means he gives him a gentle nod.

RUFIO
Tell him.

FLASHBACK BEGINS:

TITUS (V.O)
It was in the old City MARS ONE.

Titus is walking on a city street like a New York scene today, but dirty and cluttered. Beggars on sidewalk.

Street vendors hawk their wares.

TITUS (V.O)
They kept the ORIGINAL COLONY as it was. The elders thought best to keep site as a homage to the past.
So it has remained that way. The Festival Of Mars is still held there.

Titus continues on examining goods. He Barters some, but it’s just a tease.

TITUS (V.O)
Every year religious zealots descend on the City to pay respect to Mars. Sometimes even an Emperor will grace our little planet.
(beat)
Mars used to be a tourist attraction till flights to Venus became Popular.

RUFIO (V.O.)
Stick with the story.

Titus again walking, minding his own business. He sees an old man crippled and begging. Pity in Titus eyes. People just pass him by, indifferent.
TITUS (V.O)
I saw him there, unwanted and alone. I felt the urge to put him out of his misery.

Titus feels for his sword.

TITUS (V.O)
An honorable death.

Then a hand on Titus sword. Titus turns to a young bearded man in late 20’s. He’s dressed in a worn T-Shirt and ragged jeans. He wears flip flops.

TITUS (V.O)
I looked straight into his piercing blue eyes and I understood.

TRAJAN (V.O.)
Understood?

TITUS (V.O)
That the man would be okay.

The stranger bends down to the beggar and takes his hand.

STRANGER
Rise.

The crippled man gets to his feet just as though he had stopped to take a rest. The people go about their business not noticing the little drama.

Titus stares in disbelief. The young man turns to Titus, smiles, and simply leaves.

FLASHBACK ENDS:

Titus is in a lost gaze. Most of the group remain silent, the story sinking in. One of the other Gladiator’s, Crixus (20’s) rough, and mean, erupts in laughter.

CRIXUS
More a drunken tale.

TITUS
It was true I tell you.

RUFIO
Well if it be, the marble Gods we worship may be just that, marble.
TRAJAN
Could be just a bag of tricks.

TITUS
Then why is the Empire so interested in him.

The group rests on the debate and settles down to sleep.

INT. TRAJAN’S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Lucila watches TV, there is a knock at the door it startles her. Opening, it’s Marcus, he has a grim look on face.

LUCILA
What do you want?

MARCUS
I had to tell you before it got on TV.

LUCILA
Tell me, tell me what?

MARCUS
There’s been an accident.

LUCILA
Trajan?

Marcus steps in. He braces her.

MARCUS
Trajan tried to escape. In the scuffle the ship lost control. Everyone was killed.

Lucila slaps and beats on him.

LUCILA
You bastard! You fucking bastard I hate you!

A Praetorian opens door, Marcus shoos him away.

MARCUS
(to Guard)
It’s okay.

Lucila falls into Marcus arms wailing and crying uncontrollably. Marcus strokes her hair trying to calm her down.

(CONTINUED)
LUCILA
Now I have nothing. I’m all alone.

MARCUS
No, no I’m still here, you’ll never want for anything. Come stay at the palace for a while.

LUCILA
You’d do that for me.

MARCUS
I owe you both, it was my fault. I never should have tried this.

LUCILA
It was reckless.

MARCUS
If only Trajan would have trusted me. I don’t know what went wrong.

INT. IMPERIAL SENATE - DAY

Marcus sits on the thrown looking polished and in control. Two armed Pratorian on either side of him.

The Senate files in Brutus Villa obviously distraught and worried takes his seat. The other Senators find their places.

The air is tense.

MARCUS
You are all aware of the past days events.

A Senator rises.

SENATOR
Caesar I must protest!

MARCUS
Sit down! I’m within my rights to call an emergency session!

SENATOR
On what grounds!

MARCUS
My Father was Killed!
(calming down)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS (cont’d)
The facts will render my case.
Senator Villa would you rise please.

Brutus rises knowing what’s coming.

MARCUS
As you know your son assassinated my father.

BRUTUS
He did no such thing!

MARCUS
The facts are plain. But the motive, until now, was unclear. In his statement to avoid capital punishment, Trajan revealed to me that what he did was to ensure your election to Caesar.

The Senate erupts in protest. Marcus stands in a commanding mode shouts.

MARCUS
And, that like minded Senators where in on the plot to secure prime cabinet spots!

BRUTUS
My son would never betray his Emperor. Why haven’t you brought him before us?!

MARCUS
Trajan Villa is Dead!

Brutus looks like someone has punched him in the gut. He stumbles back to his seat sick.

MARCUS
Brutus Villa you are under arrest for treason.

The Senators even louder we hear.

WHAT PROOF?

THIS IS AGAINST CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

OUTRAGEOUS!

The Guards come and take Brutus away.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
As a further safeguard I am enacting Emergency Order Number 4. This Senate is hereby suspended until a full investigation can be performed!

Through all their blustering the Senate is stunned into silence. They stand there not believing what has happened.

Other Guards rush in to quell any unrest.

Marcus now omnipotent nods to them the guards move in and herd the Senators out.

Marcus bodyguard and Praetorian Cato (35) dark skinned black hair steps up. Cato is intelligent and wise.

CATO
Sire you have the Praetorian support but suspending the Senate—I don’t think that—

MARCUS
(cutting him off)
Your job is not to think. You could be replaced too.

Marcus in a huff walks out Cato and other guard at his side.

EXT. SENATE - DAY

The Guards lock and seal Senate Chamber and leave. The Senators mill around and talk among themselves.

SENATOR
Suspension.

SENATOR TWO
How will he spin this?

SENATOR THREE
The public will never go for it.

SENATOR
WE may have underestimated him.

Marcus walks past them, they bow a little keeping silent.
INT. PALACE LUCILA’S ROOM - NIGHT

Lucila is in her state room, it is bigger than her entire apartment. She looks around, a beautiful dresser with lots of makeup. On to closet filled with clothes all the latest fashions.

She looks at labels, astonished.

LUCILA
All my size.

She tries on shoes, a perfect fit. Like a kid in candy store, she smiles a little. Then an image of Trajan comes to her.

She flits out and turns on TV. It shimmers on, an image of Marcus fills the screen.

MARCUS
I want to assure the public this is only temporary. The House Investigative comity is working hard to uncover any further plots against this Government.

The screen switches to another reporter on the street amongst a huge crowd of protesters.

The Reporter has to cover ears to speak.

REPORTER
As you can see this surprise has not gone well for the young Caesar.

The reporter turns mic to a close PROTESTER, intervening.

REPORTER
What do you think of this announcement?

PROTESTER
It’s criminal, I mean how can he maintain the government?

Marcus enters room.

MARCUS
They’re like Children frightened of a little change.

(CONTINUED)
LUCILA
What you’ve done goes beyond all reason.

MARCUS
It will be for the best, you’ll see.

LUCILA
How?

MARCUS
Wiping out corruption. You said it yourself everything revolves around special interest groups. The real problems never get solved.

LUCILA
But by LAW Marcus not decree.

INT. GOVERNMENT LAB - NIGHT

Marcus and Cato enter the large environmental lab. A technician hovers over a computer screen. On it we see a scan of the human brain.

The nerdy Technician is surprised and nervous at Marcus visit. This is Joshua (40) loner, only comfortable around computers. He is a cyborg tech.

MARCUS
How goes it?

JOSHUA
Fine, we’ll be ready soon.

MARCUS
I hope so, I’m walking on thin ice.

JOSHUA
Once I’ve crossed linked the system you’ll have total control.

MARCUS
Total?

JOSHUA
Absolutely, they will follow your decree to the letter.

(CONTINUED)
CATO
I’m sorry sir, what?

MARCUS
Remember the Crystal Blue Chips the senators were so fanatical about?

CATO
Yes for protection.

MARCUS
Exactly. I had one implanted too.

JOSHUA
You see with everything interconnected through the web you can access everyone at once.

MARCUS
What ever I think they will do without question.

Joshua kind of giggles like a mad scientist.

JOSHUA
One big super brain.

CATO
But not everyone has one. Certainly not on Mars.

MARCUS
That’s where these come in.

Marcus walks over to a control panel and presses button.

A large screen draws back revealing a large hanger. In it, thousands of BATTLE BOTS. Robotic killing machines.

MARCUS
A military contract I procured. Now I even have an army at my fingertips. I told you you could be replaced.

Cato is stunned by such a vast plan. He makes sure that Marcus knows his loyalty.

CATO
I will be proud to lead them.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
I know you will. Now we must give the people some entertainment till we can implement our little plan.

CATO
Entertainment?

MARCUS
Games Cato, Games.

CATO
Gladiators?

MARCUS
I want you to go to Mars for an exhibition game with my Battle Bots. We will start a betting pool. Nothing satisfies the masses better than gambling and sports.

Marcus leans in on glass staring at his Frankenstein Creations.

MARCUS
Man verses Machine. Which will win.

EXT. MARS DESERT - DAY

Rufio and Trajan spar with one another. Rufio’s grace, and fighting elegance evident.

Trajan tries to emulate, but to no avail, he seems to have lost the advantage he had before.

Rufio parries, long deliberate blows, it's all Trajan can do to fend him off. Trajan waves to HOLD UP.

Trajan trying to catch his breath.

TRAJAN
Wait a minute.

RUFIO
You won’t have a minute in the arena.

He then begins his attack again in deadly earnest.

Trajan does better.
RUFIO
That’s right pace yourself.

Rufio swings for Trajan’s head. He ducks and swings around. He deflects the blade coming from behind.

RUFIO
Control your fear.
(beat)
Anticipate.

TRAJAN
A blow to the left will throw your opponent off balance.

RUFIO
Correct, compensate.

Rufio testing, swings wildly left. Trajen dodges, comes around and scores a touch in the small of Rufio’s back.

RUFIO
Good, but not enough to kill. Just enough to piss him off. Anger is a powerful motivator, remember. He could still have enough fight in him to kill you.

TRAJAN
Why do fight like these games are to the death.

Rufio stops, resting, breathing heavy. He’s in that Zen like state again.

RUFIO
Maybe they should be.

TRAJAN
Even in their long history they were rarely to the death.

RUFIO
That’s right, made patrons wealthy, and Stars of the Gladiators.

TRAJAN
Well nothings changed then.

RUFIO
The men have. When your no longer living on that edge, life isn’t as sweet.

(CONTINUED)
Titus approaches the two slinging them towels to wipe their sweat. Trajan and Rufio towel off.

TITUS
Don’t let him rag on you too much, we’ve all heard this speech before.

RUFIO
And little you’ve learned.

TITUS
On the contrary, it’s made me rich.

RUFIO
It’s all about the money, there is no honor anymore.

TRAJAN
You referring to the Bionics?

RUFIO
It’s not their fault, they just want their cut.

(beat, long pause)
I fear that man will be replaced by something else altogether, a victim of commercialism.

TRAJAN
I think you need one of those Mar’s Priest Robes.

They all have a big hardy laugh.

A low rumble in the distance accompanied by a small red dust cloud. Titus ears perk up.

TITUS
They found us.

TRAJAN
Found? Who?

RUFIO
(sighing)
The men who hold the purse strings.

A Desert Rover on wheels pulls up. The driver in goggles obviously irritated sits up on back of seat.

Flipping goggles up the red dust outlining his eyes.

Mad as hell.
CONTINUED:

DRIVER
I wish you wouldn’t pull these stunts. I’ve been all the way to Mars One and the Pyramids trying to find you.

RUFIO
Missed me?

DRIVER
Get the fuck in, the Manager is mad as hell.

TITUS
Season’s over, we have our down time.

DRIVER
Shut up, somethings big has come up.

TRAJAN
What?

DRIVER
Who the fuck are you?

RUFIO
Never mind, what?

DRIVER
They don’t tell me squat, just do!

EXT. MARS TWO - DAY

The City is clean but still not as impressive as Romanus. No skyscrapers here, a subtropical landscape with palms.

A planned city with a perfect grid pattern. Large Colosseum in it’s center.

The Rover pulls up next to it. A sign above the entrance in neon reads HOME OF THE MARTIAN AVENGERS.

Rufio and others grab their gear and head into the building.

Glass doors automatically open.
INT. COLOSSEUM - DAY

The Colosseum is empty. Vendor kiosks stand shuttered til next season.

Passing by automatic ticket gate to escalators.

Down the group goes to the Training area.

Through swinging doors they pass.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - DAY

Walls lined with lockers benches in the middle. Free weights and other workout equipment to the side.

Other of their teammates are there in various states of undress and working out.

This is not an all male sport there are female Gladiators too. They are not shy around one another, this is just a job to them.

Trajan notices one female leg pressing a thousand pounds.

She hardly strains at all.

RUFIO
A Bionic, had both her legs replaced.

Rufio heads to his locker, the word TRAINER above it.

He opens and tosses gear in. One of their other teammates approaches them.

TEAMMATE
Enjoy your camping trip.

RUFIO
You should try it sometime, fresh air would clear that thick skull.

TEAMMATE
Don’t test me old man, you ain’t king of the games no more.

The Teammate demonstrates his power bending a steal barbell.

He walks away disgusted.

(CONTINUED)
TRAJAN
You have many friends like that?

RUFIO
Too reliant on technology.

TEammate Two
Good to see you.

Titus joins them.

TITUS
What’s up?

TEammate Two
Don’t know, got a message to come in or forfeit weeks pay. I was on my way to Earth. I wanted to get away before that Festival of Mars and all the freaks show up.

RUFIO
Know what you mean.

The swinging doors open and in walks the Manager (50’s). He’s dressed in a typical Red Jumper with the Mar’s Avengers Logo in Gold across it. He chews gum.

Beside him a man in a suit, he looks like money. Slick back gray hair an air of aristocracy, this in Antoninus (Tony) Sulla (65) owner of the Mars Avengers.

Once a Senator he was part of the Military Industrial complex made a fortune on weapons designs. Kind of sleazy, but fair.

MANAGER
All right huddle up.

Everyone breaks from what they are doing and forms circle around manager. He holds a clipboard then hoists leg up onto Bench and leans on it.

Tony clears his throat, he’s edgy but confident.

MANAGER
Alright settle down.

TONY
We have a bit of a situation. One that will ultimately prove whether men continue in the Arena.
TITUS
(sarcastic)
OOO! Sounds dire.

MANAGER
Can that.

TONY
Our New Emperor wants games.

RUFIO
Well tell him to get in line. The season doesn’t start for six months.

TONY
Not that simple. He wants to replace you with Battle Bots. No huge salaries, no egos to groom.

Tony walks around group eying them up and down. These guys are expensive he knows the upside to this.

TONY
No housing, No Medical costs, No Uniforms. It’s just pure profit.

RUFIO
Sounds like you’ve already sold out.

TONY
No! The Games are more than money to me.
(pause)
That’s right Rufio. Men still need heroes, Gods if you will. They need something to look up to, to be better than themselves.

Tony continues amongst the players.

TONY
That’s why I have a little wager with the Emperor.

TITUS
Wager?

Tony has a gleam in his eye, prideful.
TONY
A bet! That any one of you can
stand up to one of them!

TRAJAN
These are machines, we don’t know
anything about them.

TONY
Who’s this?

MANAGER
I don’t know.

Rufio stands and slaps Trajan on the shoulder, smiling.

RUFIO
The best natural talent I’ve seen
in a long time.

TONY
I see. Anyway this thing has gone
global. There are betting pools all
over earth and the colonies too.
What’ya say.

TITUS
What’s in it if we win?

TONY
It’s not we its who. One man one
Battle Bot, winner take all.

RUFIO
Winner take all?

TONY
This match is unto the death.

The team explodes with anger, shouting.

TEammate
To the death?!

TEammate TWO
That’s illegal.

RUFIO
Death matches were outlawed
Centuries ago.
TONY
Well new time new rules. The Senate has been suspended. The Caesar uncovered a plot within the Senate to assassinate his father. Brutus Villa was arrested he and his son conspired to kill him.

Trajan starts up Rufio pulls him back shaking his head no.

TEAMMATE
Count me out.

The others agree with him S/O

NO WAY MAN

NOT FOR ALL THE GOLD OF ZEUS.

RUFIO
I’ll take that bet.

TRAJAN
You’ll be killed.

RUFIO
Better to die with honor, than a slave to a machine.

TONY
Good, we’ll show them what a real Gladiator can do.

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Lucila is now dressed to the nines perfect hair and make up. She sits in the parlor, looking bored and sad. A bird in a gilded cage.

Marcus enters, looking proud and in control. He walks over to bar and pours himself a drink.

MARCUS
You look lovely.

LUCILA
What am I to do all day? I lost my job you know. They think I’m the fiance of a Traitor!
CONTINUED:

MARCUS
Why work? You have everything you need.

LUCILA
This is all temporary Marcus. When the Senate reconvenes and I’m sure they will after the House sees there’s no grand conspiracy. A new vote will go out for a general election.

MARCUS
Are you sure?

LUCILA
What have you done?

MARCUS
Nothing, nothing at all.

Marcus has a cat like grin on his face as he sits sipping his drink. He stands up and goes to window all Romanus spreads before him.

There is some gaiety in the streets below.

EXT. ROMANUS STREET CORNER - NIGHT

A large neon billboard with Rufio’s picture on one side and the Battle Bot Image on the other. It reads MAN OR MACHINE WHICH WILL WIN.

In the middle of it is a scoreboard with the odds numbers. A Booky stands below it taking money.

People line up to place their bets. He hawks his business.

BOOKY
Alright, Alright, Alright! Who’s gonna win? I got ten to one odds!

We hear:

I’LL TAKE SOME OF THAT

OKAY ME TOO!

The Booky takes their money. The Line and crowd grows.
INT. GOVERNMENT LAB - DAY

Marcus and Cato are with the Joshua. He finishes up some calculations.

    JOSHUA
    That’s about it.

    MARCUS
    (nervous)
    Will I feel anything?

    JOSHUA
    Might give you a slight headache at first.

    MARCUS
    What about the others?

    JOSHUA
    They won’t know a thing.

    CATO
    Not like Zombies?

    JOSHUA
    No, everyone will behave pretty much like normal. Except they’ll agree with whatever you say.

    MARCUS
    Impressive.

    CATO
    Should a man have so much power?

    MARCUS
    Throw the switch.

Joshua flips it on a whirring noise. Marcus twinges a little, then settles down.

    MARCUS
    Whew that was a rush!

    JOSHUA
    Your good to go.

    MARCUS
    Lets give this a little test.

Marcus and Cato leave the lab.
INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

They take the elevator up to the fiftieth floor. Casually they mill around, People stop and salute him.

A young pretty business woman seems to be talking to herself. She sits on an open balcony.

CATO
She’s connected with CRYSTAL BLUE.

Marcus walks up to her, she stands.

WOMAN
(to herself)
I’ll have to call you later.

MARCUS
Please, I hope I’m not interrupting.

WOMAN
No Sire.

MARCUS
What a beautiful day.

WOMAN
Yes it is.

MARCUS
I think it would be a good Idea to see if you could fly.

WOMAN
I’ve always wanted to try.

MARCUS
Well do it.

WOMAN
Good Idea!

Before Cato can react the Woman stands up on Balcony railing and flings herself off.

Cato stunned runs over to railing the woman hits with a thud below.

MARCUS
Well it works.

Marcus turns and leaves nonchalant.
EXT SENATE CHAMBER - DAY

The Senators file in one by one a Reporter Stands in front of TV Camera.

    REPORTER
    In one of the quickest House investigations in history they found no further evidence of conspiracy.

INT. SENATE CHAMBER - DAY

The Senators take their respective seats, they get settled in, then Marcus enters with Guards. The Senators stand and Shout:

HAIL CAESAR!

Marcus sits and then Senators do likewise.

    MARCUS
    Sorry for the inconvenience Senators.

    SENATOR
    You were only being cautious.

    MARCUS
    My deepest apologies to you Senator Villa.

    BRUTUS
    Quite alright Sire.

    MARCUS
    Now Gentleman a vote. I propose that in order to establish a more stable government we return to the idea of that Great Caesar Augustus. Autocratic rule by decree, only this way can we get rid of corruption and special interest groups.

The Senate stands up and applauds. Brutus comes up and shakes his hand.

    MARCUS
    So I take that as a yes.
BRUTUS
Good work my boy! HAIL CAESAR.

Marcus stands thanking them and takes a bow.

EXT. DESERT - DAY
MONTAGE BEGINS

Rufio and Trajan train together.

They run and climb the mountains. Trajan is getting ripped.

Atop cliff wall they spar with swords. It is elegant their moves are perfectly orchestrated.

Slow-motion as:

Trajan attacks -- no fury, just control-- Rufio tries to deflect the blow, Trajan anticipates - he swings his sword elegantly - -Rufio blocks it -- Trajan counters.

Rufio presses forward, his sword slashing masterfully, forcing Trajan back, Rufio counters with complex moves as he retreats --Trajan keeps moving forward, calm -- finally Rufio’s sword is swept aside in one clean movement.

MONTAGE ENDS

RUFIO
Good, your balance is better.

TRAJAN
Still a little off on thrust.

RUFIO
That will come in time.

TRAJAN
You nervous?

RUFIO
About the fight? No, when it is time for a man to die, it’s time.

TRAJAN
How can you be so casual about it.

RUFIO
It’s not casual, I value my life as much as the next man.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
RUFIO (cont’d)
There comes a time though when death is the preferred outcome. To make a stand, cross this line and no further.

TRAJAN
So even if you fall, you will have won.

RUFIO
Exactly. You learn quick, but do not think to much in the arena. Let instinct guide your actions.

TRAJAN
You get a little cerebral.

RUFIO
So it’s been said.

They laugh and start up again with the training.

INT. ARENA LOCKER ROOM – DAY

The big event has arrived. Rufio prepares for battle. The chants and low thunder of the crowd above reverberates through the room.

Trajan helps him into the old traditional gear updated to modern standards.

First the Baltues (sword belt) heavy made of thick leather.

The Manica - Protective arm wraps, equipped with pressure senors.

The Cuirass - Breastplate, also updated with vital sign readouts. The team DOCTOR checks the readings

DOCTOR
Pulse 101, respiration 40, heartbeat 30 beats per minute. Your as cool as them come Rufio.

Rufio pulls on the leg grieves.

Finally the heavy Galea - Visored helmet, beautifully adorned with a gold crest. Trajan flips on the switches.

We see heads up display through Rufio’s POV. He attaches earpiece and microphone.

(Continued)
Rufio hoists up his large shield as Tony presents him with his sword. A traditional ritual of the owner.

TONY
Good Luck.

Tony means it, almost Fatherly he pats him on the shoulder.

Trajan steps back admiring the magnificent site.

RUFIO
For Honor.

The other teammates look on solemnly. Trajan can’t bring himself to speak.

Then, alone Rufio turns and climbs the incline to the Arena floor.

EXT. ARENA - DAY

Rufio marches stridently through the gaping triumphal arch.

The crowd roars giant display screens line the roof his every move plastered on them.

The Crowd chants Rufio!, Rufio!

Rufio raises his hand in acknowledgment. Another screen flickers on in the Caesar Box. Marcus appears, broadcasting from Earth.

Marcus speaks from the screen.

MARCUS
Hail Rufio!

RUFIO
Hail Caesar! We who about to die salute you.

INT. ANNOUNCER BOX - DAY

ANNOUNCER
The scene is electric ladies and gentlemen!

ANNOUNCER TWO
Rufio looks at the top of his form! It’s the moment of truth.

(CONTINUED)
EXT. ARENA - DAY

The opposing arch opens. Rufio steadies himself but still cool and confident, the crowd goes silent.

Rufio and crowd stare at gaping black hole of entrance, nothing, then the sound of a whirring noise mechanical.

Moments pass like hours, then it appears a shiny humanoid. Metallic arms and legs, gyros and servos whine as it slowly plods forward.

It’s heavy, thuds reverberate on the soft sand. It stands roughly Rufio’s size. A Robot Gladiator complete with traditional armor.

Rufio assumes battle stance the Battle Bot mimics him.

An unnerving sight, the crowd is breathless.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Trajan and other team members watch, uneasy. The Manager has his headset on, with clipboard he jots down moves.

Tony beside him, a worried look, not expecting this.

The Manager whispers into MIC.

MANAGER
Forfeit Now!

Tony a look.

EXT. ARENA - DAY

Rufio breaths in and out pacing himself.

RUFIO
Too Late.

Rufio takes the initiative and lunges at Battle Bot. Rufio fights well, with a strange elegance, his body flowing like liquid – he strikes a few blows, the Bottle Bot unweilding.

The clanks on sword against metal seem useless – the middle seems unprotected maybe a weak point. The Battle Bot holds sheild tightly guarding it.

(CONTINUED)
The Battle Bot makes its move many quick thrusts driving Rufio back, he’s in trouble.

The Battle Bot is fast and unrelenting motivated by programming nothing more.

Cornered -- the Battle Bot is slicing at him -- it is a desperate battle -- Rufio is losing -- his sword is slammed away -- the Battle Bot raises his sword for the kill --

And with a sudden roar Rufo EXPLODES into action he dives for his sword -- he comes up, swings slashes at the Battle Bot.

It is a dazzling display of Rufio’s skill -- he moves towards the Bot at amazing speed -- spinning around he hacks the back side of the Bots neck.

The Blow rattles something, the Bot is disoriented.

Rufio’s turns, he drives on, the Bot ever unsteady.

The Crowd on their feet

Rufio! Rufio! they chant!

EXT. EARTH STREET - NIGHT

The large open theater where Booky is taking bets is going wild, money exchanges hands quickly.

A large neon read-out ticks away numbers as odds go up and up.

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Marcus sits in his viewing box the camera trained on him. Lucila sits beside him.

Marcus fidgets in chair he’s losing money and prestige. It’s going badly for him, and he’s pissed.

MARCUS
I invested heavily in these tin cans!
EXT. ARENA - DAY

Rufio gaining the edge. The Bot is wobbly from all the blows. Circuitry begins to smoke.

Then it comes, Rufio deflects the Bot's shield and thrusts into it's middle, disabling it. The Bot Crumples a mass of wires and metal spark, it's dead.

The Crowd on it's feet.

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Marcus stands irate.

MARCUS
Get me that Owner, what’s his name?
Tony!

Marcus picks up the phone.

MARCUS
Tony!

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY/PALACE - NIGHT

Tony on the phone with Marcus.

TONY
Yes Sire it was a great match.

MARCUS
(scheming)
How about we double the odds.

TONY
Sir?

MARCUS
I wager two of my bots against your man.

TONY
Sir my man is exhausted.

MARCUS
I’ll pay your teams expenses for the next year.

Tony’s in financial straights, he takes the bet.

(CONTINUED)
TONY
You got it.

MARCUS
You won’t regret it.

TONY
Send in two more Bots.

The rest of the team is aghast. Trajan steps up.

TRAJAN
You’ve got to be kidding.

TONY
I never kid.

EXT. ARENA - DAY

Rufio triumphant, parades with his arms outstretched soaking up the crowds' adoration.

The opposing entrance doors swing up and two more Bots appear. Rufio stops in his tracks looking at them.

The Crowd settles down, stunned

INT. ANNOUNCER BOX - DAY

ANNOUNCER
What’s this?

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Marcus cunning as a cat appeals to Rufio’s ego.

EXT. ARENA - DAY

Marcus on screen speaking directly to Rufio.

MARCUS
What do say Rufio. Still think Man is better than machine.

RUFIO
He will always be, there’s no loyalty in a machine.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
Prove it, see if your teammates come to your aide.

Rufio defiantly salutes him and prepares for Battle.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The team bows their heads they aren’t going to risk their lives.

Even Titus is reluctant. Trajan stares in wonderment at inaction.

TRAJAN
So your just going to leave him?

TITUS
He picked this fight.

EXT. ARENA - DAY

The two Bots circle Rufio like wolves. Rufio firing on all senses plans strategy. He speaks into Mic.

RUFIO
Okay Boys give me a plan here.

There is no response. Rufio taps MIC.

RUFIO
Come on.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The Manager hangs his head low and takes off MIC.

TRAJAN
What are you doing?

EXT. ARENA - DAY

Rufio goes on the offensive. He strikes the first blow. The bots easily deflect it. They’ve adapted anticipating his moves.

RUFIO
(realizing)
The first was a test!
The Bots engage him. More aggressive, a little panic in Rufio. They bore in on him, to his credit Rufio manages to keep pace.

Blades swing and slash, it is all a blure, back and back Rufio goes. A Bot jumps over and behind him a quick swing of it’s sword catches Rufio in the shin.

Off balance he staggers back. Rufio into MIC

RUFIO
I’m in real trouble.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Trajan can’t stand it no more he grabs MIC from Manager. He’s on the run he rips sword from a sheath and a Helmet.

Like a bull out of the gate he slams through locker room door and up ramp.

TRAJAN
I’m coming hold on!

EXT. ARENA - DAY

Trajan flies through open arch at a dead run. Rufio is cornered. Too late the Bot with no Mercy kills him.

TRAJAN
NOOOOO!

Rufio drops like a stone dead.

Trajan like a mad man plummets into the Bots swinging wildly. Pushed on by pure adrenalin and grief.

He takes one with relative ease catching it off guard.

The crowd is going wild.

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Marcus victory short lived.

MARCUS
Who the fuck is this?
INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The team is glued to the screen they cheer.

    TITUS
    Go kid!

    TONY
    He’s good.

EXT. ARENA - DAY

One on One Trajan and the Bot. The Bot has regrouped using Rufio’s tactics. But Trajan is aware of them.

He parries as the Bot pounds away. Finally Trajan surges up with on final explosive bolt of energy.

His sword comes crashing down on the Bot’s head a crack is heard. The Bot spins around wildly and crashes itself into the wall exploding.

The crowd is stunned by this strange new gladiator. But then an enormous roar grows from the crowd -- wave after wave of adulation for the hero of the day.

Trajan looks around taking it all in
Then he turns to the Imperial Screen. Marcus glaring down at him. Trajan returns his stare at Marcus through his helmet mask.

The crowd is intrigued, growing quiet. What is going on?
Then Trajan deliberately takes off his helmet. He shouts.

    TRAJAN
    It is I Marcus!

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Lucila stands her breath taken away staring disbelievingly. Marcus at a loss for words. He grabs the phone.

    MARCUS
    Arrest that man!

    LUCILA
    You bastard!

She hauls off and slaps him hard.
EXT. ARENA - DAY

Armed guards pour from the Archway, Trajan surveys the situation. Takes his best guess and runs from the nearest exit.

Guards seal it, he runs to the wall spectators reach down and help him over the railing.

The Crowd surges around him, cloaking him from view. They move towards the exists. It is getting out of control.

The guards can’t hold them back they spill out into the streets in all directions.

EXT. STREET - DAY

In the confusion a young girl takes Trajan’s arm. She pulls him into an alley way.

    GIRL
    Come with me!

    TRAJAN
    Who are you?

    GIRL
    A friend.

They disappear in the confusion. The crowds and guards running everywhere.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DUSK

The light is fading, buildings cast long shadows. The girl leads Trajan to an old warehouse. She gently raps on the door.

It opens a bearded young man with striking features appears. The look of apprehension across his face, this is Peter (20 something).

    PETER
    Were you followed?

    GIRL
    No.

    PETER
    How can you be sure, the police are everywhere.
He reaches out and grabs them both hauling them inside.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DUSK

PETER
How many times have I told you, not to come by without doing a walk by.

GIRL
I’m sorry, this one needed our help.

PETER
(to Trajan)
And who are you?

TRAJAN
Look Pal, I don’t like being on this blessed rock anymore than you do. So why don’t I ask the questions.

PETER
Looks like a Gladiator to me.

TRAJAN
Good guess.

GIRL
I’m Mary, this is Peter.

Trajan backs down a little, coming off the adrenalin rush.

TRAJAN
Sorry I just saw my best friend killed.

MARY
They were going to kill him too when-

PETER
You decided to bring him here. Mary for the love-

A Voice from the shadows speaks up another young man appears a hippie type. Long hair and a well groomed beard. Thirty something he wears a flowered shirt, worn blue jeans and sandals.
YOUNG MAN  
Exactly Peter, for Love. That is why I am here.

TRAJAN  
And who are you?

YOUNG MAN  
One who has been foretold.

PETER  
Master I do not mean to be rude but we know nothing about him.

TRAJAN  
Master? You a slaver?

YOUNG MAN  
Of sorts, a master of men’s hearts.

TRAJAN  
You speak in riddles.

YOUNG MAN  
We help all those in need.

There is an aura that seems to surround the young man, Trajan senses it. Then other followers appear surrounding them.

TRAJAN  
You’re THE ONE aren’t you?

THE ONE  
I go by many names but that one has stuck.

He laughs a little breaking the tension between them THE ONE puts his arm on Trajan’s shoulder.

THE ONE  
Come sit with us.

EXT. MARS LANDING PORT - DAY

Lucila exits landing vehicle escorted by several ladies in waiting. Cato is there waiting for her with other guards.

CATO  
My Lady we are to take you in for safe keeping.

(CONTINUED)
LUCILA
I am the consort of the Emperor you will do no such thing.

CATO
It is by his order that I follow.

LUCILA
(speaking softly)
He has become a monster Cato.

CATO
We shouldn’t speak of such things here.

She understands.

CATO
(to other Guards)
Leave us.

LUCILA
Walk with me.

CATO
There is something you should know.

LUCILA
You have orders to kill me.

CATO
If you do not cooperate.

LUCILA
Cooperate for what?

CATO
Crystal Blue.

LUCILA
The Security Chip?

CATO
He has turned it into something perverted. Once a person has it implanted he has total control of your actions.

LUCILA
How is this possible?
CATO
I do not know but, I saw him ask a young woman to jump to her death. Why do you think the Senate approved his emergency powers.

LUCILA
He will not stop.

CATO
We have one option the festival of Mars is underway. He will take no action to violate it’s sanctity.
(beat)
You can disappear.

Cato produces a worn and shabby cloak.

CATO
Take this, disguise yourself as one of the Pilgrims to the festival

EXT. MARS ONE - DAY
The streets are filled, it is a carnival atmosphere. Mars Monks draped in red hooded cloaks wander the streets.

People bow and steer clear of them. One man feeling a call challenges one of them.

The man assumes a combat position. Without even removing his cloak the Monk strikes catching the man off guard. The man’s head falls to the ground as the rest of him crumples.

Lucila makes her way past this, keeping her head low and covered.

On and on through the city searching for something, anything. Finally exhausted she spies a cheap motel.

EXT. CHEAP MOTEL - DAY
She raps on a glass covered office. A greasy ATTENDANT opens glass.

ATTENDANT
We’re all full up lady.

LUCILA
Please anything.

(CONTINUED)
ATTENDANT
Something might free up in an hour or so.

Lucila then notices the little Ladies of the night milling around. This is nothing more than a brothel. The thought sickens her.

LUCILA
Thanks anyway.

Leaving, she notices a small group collecting near a Retro Drive In Theater. A man wears a Sandwich sign which reads FOOD FOR THOSE IN NEED. Lucila’s stomach growls.

LUCILA
(to herself)
Maybe someone has a place to stay.

EXT. DRIVE IN - NIGHT

She eases across street cars whip by, she approaches the young MAN. He is a bit shabby but has a kind face.

MAN
Hello. I’m Andrew.

LUCILA
Lucila.

ANDREW
Greetings Lucila.

LUCILA
What’s going on?

ANDREW
Just what it seems, food for those in need.

LUCILA
Some look rather well fed to me.

A Fat man and Woman pass by.

ANDREW
There are different kinds of food, one for the stomach the other for the soul.

(CONTINUED)
LUCILA
Well, I could use both.

ANDREW
All are welcome.

Lucila proceeds inside there are thousands there. Some in cars some sitting on the roofs. She makes her way to the front where a large platform stands in front of screen.

Many people sit on the ground chatting in restless anticipation. We hear snippets of their conversations.

I saw him perform a miracle.

He made the dead live again.

He heals the lame.

Lucila doesn’t know what to make of this bohemian crowd.

She walks on looking for a place to sit. Then a VOICE one she is all too familiar with cries out her name.

VOICE
Lucila!

LUCILA
(turning quickly)
Trajan!

Trajan pushes through the ever growing crowd to get to her. Lucila pushes from her end, their love driving them forward.

TRAJAN
Lucila!

LUCILA
Trajan!

Finally the crowd parts a little seeing their endeavor. Lucila and Trajan fall into each others arms.

The mad passion of separation welling over them. They gobble each other up. Trajan kisses her all over she returns the love.

LUCILA
Oh baby! I thought you were dead!

TRAJAN
Almost was. How did you get here?

(CONTINUED)
LUCILA
Marcus took me in. I had no where to go.

TRAJAN
You mean!?

Trajan pushes her back.

LUCILA
No, we never slept together. He never pushed that. I became like his consort, I guess he thought I would eventually fall in love with him.

TRAJAN
So part of this was for his love of you.

LUCILA
Maybe, a little, but when I saw you alive on the screen I caught the next shuttle to Mars.

TRAJAN
I’m sure you were followed.

LUCILA
Only as far as New Mars. I have an alley, one that is close to Marcus.

TRAJAN
Who?

LUCILA
Cato, Captain of the Praetorian Guard.

TRAJAN
You can’t trust them.

LUCILA
This one, I believe I can.

Peter comes up to them all welcoming.

PETER
Come, to the front and take a seat, the Master comes.
LUCILA
(to Trajan)
What is this?

TRAJAN
Something wonderful. These people aided my escape, they took me in and hid me from the Praetorian.

LUCILA
What kind of cult have you gotten yourself into?

TRAJAN
It’s no cult, come and listen.

Peter guides them through the crowd to a spot right below the stage. They take their seats.

TRAJAN
Remember that story about THE ONE.

LUCILA
Yes.

TRAJAN
This is his group.

LUCILA
He’s got quite a following.

TRAJAN
Listen to his words and you’ll understand.

EXT. DRIVE IN STAGE - NIGHT

THE ONE walks on the stage the crowd starts to settle down.

THE ONE
Evening folks. Anybody hungry?

Hands go up.

THE ONE
We have plenty for everyone.

Peter quickly steps up on stage with a hot dog serving box, and drink cooler.
PETER
Master the oven broke and vending machine went down. All we have is this box of hot dogs and what’s in the drink carrier.

ANDREW
We cannot possibly feed this multitude.

Lucila overhears the conversation.

LUCILA
(quietly, to Trajan)
Well, can we find a place to eat afterwords?

TRAJAN
Watch.

THE ONE
IT will be enough.

With that, The One reaches in and pulls out a hot dog and then a drink. The followers of The One start passing out the food to the crowd.

This goes on and on hot dog after hot dog. THE ONE continues on until everyone has been fed. Lucila watches in amazement.

Finally all have eaten. Trajan and Lucila finish up their Hot Dogs.

THE ONE
Everybody full.

The Crowd acknowledges.

THE ONE
Now let me feed the soul.

THE ONE begins, everyone in hushed silence listens. Lucila is enthralled and mesmerized by message.

EXT. MARS LANDING PAD - DAY

A Large impressive transport vessel glistening with weapons, this is CAESAR ONE, Marcus personal Carrier.

The Bay door opens and a metal gangplank descends. Marcus departs flanked on either side by armed troops. He is met by Cato and several of the Hooded Martian Monks.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
I hope things are going as planned.

CATO
All is going well. We had her followed.

MARCUS
Is he with her?

CATO
Yes Sire.

We can see the anger and jealousy in Marcus face.

CATO
We also have tracked down THE ONE.

MARCUS
(surprised)
Excellent!

A Martian Monk steps up hearing the revelation.

MARTIAN MONK
Your Highness it is very important to quell this ONE. Especially on the eve of our most sacred of Holidays.

MARCUS
Do not worry, I We will have justice and bring stability back to the Empire.

EXT. DRIVE-IN STREET – NIGHT

The crowd starts to drift out. Trajan and Lucila walk arm in arm.

LUCILA
I thought I’d never see you again.

TRAJAN
It had crossed my mind too.

LUCILA
When Marcus told me you were killed I didn’t know what to do - I -
TRAJAN  
Shush don’t blame yourself.

Mary pushes her way through the crowd.

MARY  
Trajan! Trajan!

Trajan and Lucila turn. Lucila eyes her warily.

MARY  
What did you think?

TRAJAN  
I have never heard such a speech.  
(beat, introducing)  
Oh this is my fiance Lucila,  
Lucila, Mary. She helped me escape  
the guards.

LUCILA  
Thank you.

TRAJAN  
They have been kind to me.

Then screams the sounds of commotion. People flee  
everywhere. Tear gas canisters explode, the air is quickly  
filled with smoke. A choking man bumps into them.

MAN  
The Praetorian, they’re rounding up  
everybody.

MARY  
How did they find us!

She looks at Lucila.

LUCILA  
It wasn’t me.

A thought drifts into her head. Cato giving her the cloak to  
disguise herself. Lucila takes the cloak off. She frisks it  
finding a lump.

LUCILA  
I was tracked, Cato!

Then Cato strides into view, all pleased with himself and  
ready for a fight. Another Guard grabs Trajan. Lucila and  
Mary back up.

(CONTINUED)
TRAJAN
Cato, I knew it.

CATO
God of the Games if only for a day. You could have had it all.

TRAJAN
It’s all a lie Cato. One fabricated by technology and fed by greed. It cannot last.

CATO
(sarcastic)
What ever does?

TRAJAN
Love.

CATO
Love?! I expected more from you.

TRAJAN
Then you’ll get it!

Trajan gut punches the guard holding him and grabs his sword. The Guard reaches for his gun, but Lucila kicks it out of his hand.

Lucila picks it up and trains it on Cato.

MARY
No Lucila, don’t! Remember the Master’s words.

LUCILA
Your Master not mine.

She takes deadly aim straight at Cato’s head. Trajan steps in front of her.

LUCILA
Trajan what are you doing?

TRAJAN
No baby, this is between me and Marcus. My fate was sealed long ago, you still have a chance.

LUCILA
I’m not loosing you again.

(CONTINUED)
TRAJAN
I’ll hold them off as long as I can.

Mary grabs Lucila’s arm and pulls her away.

MARY
Come on.

TRAJAN
(to Mary)
I"m sorry some things are worth fighting for, even love.

Mary and Lucila disappear in the ensuing chaos. Cato pulls his sword out. He starts to circle Trajan.

CATO
I must say I have been looking forward to this.

TRAJAN
Careful what you wish for.

Trajan lites into him with full fury. Cato blocks and counters.

INT. DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

Peter and THE ONE are huddled with another group, strangely they do not cough from the ensuing gas. Mary and Lucila run up to them.

MARY
We have a distraction.

The S/O of clanking metal, a sword fight in progress. The One raises up.

THE ONE
This is not what I want!

MARY
Come master we must go.

PETER
She’s right.

THE ONE
I do so because Prophecy has not been seen through yet.
They all leave amongst the confusion, people are being arrested and thrown into vans.

EXT. DRIVE-IN STREET - DAY

The guards have cordoned off a circular perimeter around the combatants.

Cato and Trajan are locked in deadly conflict. Cato is holding his own, he has some skill.

TRAJAN
You fight well.

CATO
I have something to fight for!

TRAJAN
Only money, only money.

Pissed off, Cato flies into him a quick flurry of thrusts and parries. Trajan backs up, he stumbles on the curb the sword is dislodged from his hand. Cato comes in for the kill.

Cato raises his sword high over his head.

Trajan, with one eye on Cato fumbles with his other hand to find sword.

He finds and quickly grabs it as Cato descends Trajan throws his sword straight into Cato’s throat.

Stunned and shocked, Cato gurgles as blood spews everywhere. He falls like a rock to the pavement.

The other guards shocked grab Trajan and put him in shackles. They throw him into an awaiting police van with others.

INT. MARS IMPERIAL ESTATE - DAY

Nothing like the imperial palace on earth, this is more of a country estate. Red clay walls are adorned with fossils from Mars past.

Many past emperor’s busts line it’s halls. Trajan is marched in under heavy guard they proceed to an awaiting office.
INT. MARCUS OFFICE - DAY

Marcus sits behind desk going over some paperwork. Two Martian Monks on either side of him.

The guards shove Trajan through door.

MARCUS
That will be all.

The guards leave.

MARCUS
Please, have a seat.

TRAJAN
I prefer to stand.

MARCUS
Whatever, this is not going to go well for you, you know that?

TRAJAN
You tried to kill me once before and it didn’t work.

MARCUS
I have full support of the Senate and most of the people too.

TRAJAN
Only through subterfuge.

MARCUS
Oo! Big words I didn’t know Gladiators were educated.

TRAJAN
Get to point Marcus.

MARCUS
Point?!

TRAJAN
Your guards could have killed me while they had the chance.

MARCUS
Your too popular to kill now.

Marcus gets up and walks to an open wet bar. He pours himself some scotch.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
Like a drink?

TRAJAN
I don’t drink with the enemy.

MARCUS
Come on that’s an old line. Think of something more creative like I don’t drink with you because I hate your fucking guts.

TRAJAN
That’s about right.

Marcus circles Trajan studying him.

MARCUS
We will find your little band sooner or later. It’s just a matter of time.

TRAJAN
Really?, could have fooled me.

The remark inflames Marcus, he slings drink across room it crashes to the floor. He gets right in Trajan’s face, a guard hearing sound enters room gun drawn.

MARCUS
Now let me tell you something. I am going to round up all those followers of THE ONE including your precious Lucila and put them in the arena then let the Battle Bots have at it.

TRAJAN
Not even a Monster like you would do that.

MARCUS
I would do anything to restore order in the empire.

TRAJAN
There was no disorder till YOU Killed your father.

Marcus back hands him across face. Trajan pulls back with bloody lip.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
Treasonous Dog!

TRAJAN
The truth hurts when said aloud doesn’t it.

MARCUS
No one would believe you.

TRAJAN
That’s right because you control their thoughts. There is a way to cure that.

Marcus gets the threat.

MARCUS
Now that we understand one another, let me propose a different scenario.

TRAJAN
I’m listening.

MARCUS
You find this ONE again and bring him to us. I will drop all charges against you and spare the others lives.

TRAJAN
What about THE ONE?

MARCUS
His fate was sealed long ago when he went against the Gods.

TRAJAN
There is only ONE true God.

The Martian Monks throw off their cloaks in anger.

MARTIAN MONK
Blasphemer!

MARCUS
Settle down. Think Marcus, what does this ONE offer that I can’t.

TRAJAN
Peace for one.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
But your not a peaceful man. How could you deny your ancestry, the glory of the Roman Empire. Your family can trace it’s line back to the ancient Caesars. A proud family with proud Roman Traditions and values.

TRAJAN
Something you’ve forgotten.

Marcus returns to his seat behind the desk tired of the argument.

MARCUS
Will you do it or not?!

TRAJAN
Lucila would not be touched?

MARCUS
You have my word.

TRAJAN
Your word doesn’t mean much.

MARCUS
I love her too.

A look of regret on Trajan’s face he and Marcus lock eyes.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Trajan creeps in the shadows careful not to be followed. A Martian Monk approaches, he ducks into an ally.

With his back to wall Trajan waits for Monk to pass, then he pounces on him and drags him into the ally.

With several powerful blows he knocks the Monk unconscious. He then dons the Monks robe.

Satisfied he’s disguised he exits ally.

EXT. ARENA - NIGHT

Titus is leaving the building his sport bag in hand. Trajan waits in shadows then steps in front of him.

Titus stops a bit perturbed.
TRAJAN
(low disguising voice)
Do you seek a challenge?

TITUS
Look Monk, I’m not in the mood.

TRAJAN
Rufio would not approve.

TITUS
(softly)
Trajan?

TRAJAN
It is I.

TITUS
By the Gods what are you doing here?

TRAJAN
I need your help.

TITUS
Name it.

TRAJAN
Not here, their are too many ears. In the desert where we first met.

TITUS
When?

TRAJAN
Later when the Moons have set.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Trajan sits on the small outcropping of stone. Then the sound of footsteps approaching it’s pitch black.

Trajan holds his breath waiting for their signal.

TITUS
I seek a challenge.

Trajan exhales, relieved.

TRAJAN
Praise be.
TITUS
Okay what is this all about. First your exiled here because you killed the Emperor, then you try and save Rufio and they try and have you arrested.

TRAJAN
It is more complex than even that.

TITUS
Your talking like Rufio.

TRAJAN
Okay to put it simply Marcus has mutated the Crystal Blue chips to control peoples thoughts. That’s how he manipulated the Senate. They had them implanted for security purposes.

TITUS
And everyone else got a hold of them, like the old cell phone craze.

TRAJAN
Exactly.

TITUS
So why didn’t he simply implant you.

TRAJAN
I’m not sure maybe he had to get me out of the way before he could go ahead with his scheme.

TITUS
Big if.

TRAJAN
Anyway I’m not sure if I will be compromised so, that’s where I’ll need your help.

TITUS
For what?

TRAJAN
A Back Up Plan. Marcus wants me to find THE ONE and bring him in. Then he says he will let the followers alone.

(CONTINUED)
TITUS
And you don’t believe him.

TRAJAN
Not for a minute.

They continue on in hushed conversation.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Trajan makes his way along the side street. He is aware he is being followed. He catches glimpses of a Cloaked figure darting in and out of the Festival Crowd.

He jumps into ally trying to allude his follower. Glancing out he sees they are still coming his way.

Quick a thought, as the figure starts to pass Trajan reaches out and grabs it pulling it in.

The figure struggles with his grasp.

TRAJAN
Why are you following me. Marcus-

FIGURE
Trajan! It’s me!

TRAJAN
Lucila!

Lucila removes her hood they kiss passionately.

LUCILA
I thought I had lost you again.

TRAJAN
Not this time. I have a way out.

LUCILA
How?

TRAJAN
I can’t tell you now. Where are the others?

LUCILA
Hiding in the old Quarter.

TRAJAN
Take me to them.
EXT. MARS ONE OLD QUARTER - LATE AFTERNOON

The oldest part of the city run down and dirty. Grimy neon signs mark rundown restaurants and businesses. Vagrants line streets looking for handouts.

Trajan and Lucila walk the polluted sidewalks approaching a dilapidated Burger shack.

A man is waiting outside, he seems nervous and cold. Trajan notices several of the followers sitting around inside.

From inside Mary sees them and runs out.

MARY
Trajan, we feared the worst.

TRAJAN
We have to talk.

MARY
You look ill, what is the matter.

TRAJAN
Marcus let me go to find The One and bring him in.

Lucila steps back surprised and shocked.

TRAJAN
(to Lucila)
I’m sorry I kept you in the dark.
(back to Mary)
We have to get him out of the city, I have friends that can hide him on the far side of the planet beyond the Desert Plains.

LUCILA
The PLAINS are almost totally inaccessible.

TRAJAN
The dust storms making flying and surveillance impossible.

LUCILA
Yes it would be perfect.

Mary shaking her head no.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
He will not leave.

TRAJAN
Let me speak to him at least.

MARY
We were about to have dinner. Come and join us.

They proceed to the door the Man waiting outside holds the door open for them. Mary stops and introduces him.

MARY
Trajan, Lucila this is Judas.

Judas nervously shakes their hands.

JUDAS
Hey, you cool, right, uh good to see ya.

They all proceed inside.

INT.BURGER JOINT - DUSK

Worn linoleum lines the floor, yellow bar stools along the Bar. About fifty years of grease and soot on the appliances, a flash fire waiting to happen.

A few customers, probably regulars sit sipping coffee. A fat Cook prepares meals behind counter.

In back, a small sit down, dine in area. THE ONE sits at head of a table the others around him.

The Cook plops a load of burgers and fries onto a tray.

COOK
Order Up!

MARY
Could you help me with this while I get the drinks.

TRAJAN
Sure.

Trajan takes tray of food and sets in middle of the table. Mary and Lucila are close behind with the drinks.

They take their seats.
TRAJAN
Who was that creepy dude.

MARY
Judas? Don’t mind him he a recovering addict, he’s a little strung out now.

THE ONE
Everyone is well I hope.

PETER
Fine master.

TRAJAN
Sir, I’m sorry but I have to interrupt.

THE ONE
Do not worry, what is it?

TRAJAN
(flustered)
What is your real name?

THE ONE
I am the Son of God, Jesus.

TRAJAN
Thank you.

JESUS
Is that all you wanted my son?

TRAJAN
No, master you need to leave the city.

JESUS
I cannot leave, prophecy hasn’t been fulfilled.

TRAJAN
You have too, I cannot emphasize this enough.

Jesus takes a burger and splits it in half the others each take a burger from the platter.

JESUS
I tell you now that one of you who is eating with me now will betray me.
PETER
Not I Lord?

Trajan has a worried look up his face. Mary gives him a look.

JESUS
Bless this food oh Lord, eat, this is my body do in remembrance of me.

Everyone takes a bite of their burger. Jesus takes his soda and blesses it then drinks.

JESUS
Drink for this is my blood and covenant with you.

Everyone complies and drinks.

TRAJAN
Who is it that will betray you.

JESUS
One who shares my bread.

Judas sitting next to Jesus still strung out.

JUDAS
Hey man may I have that last piece I’m starving.

Trajan notices the move, Judas grabs last half of burger then gets up and leaves.

TRAJAN
Master we have to go now!

LUCILA
Please come with us.

JESUS
I cannot.

Trajan and Lucila stand.

TRAJAN
We must go, I’m sorry.

JESUS
I know what is in your heart. Good resides in both of you. Have the strength to carry what I have said with you. We will meet again in the Kingdom of heaven.

(CONTINUED)
I hope so. We have a transport to the border, meet us at the last marker if you change your mind.

Lucila hugs Mary.

Lucila

Thank you.

Mary

Be well.

EXT.STREET - NIGHT

Judas makes his way along the dark side streets. He is trailed by Marcus and Lucila.

Marcus

Leave it to Marcus to find a Junkie to do his bidding.

Lucila

Leave him be it’s not worth it.

Marcus

I will not get my life back at the expense of another.

Judas has picked up the pace, ahead of him a security van pulls to sidewalk.

Marcus and Lucila duck into shadows.

Judas approaches van the window slides down. Inside one of the Martian Monks peer out.

Judas

Hey man, they are going to be in park later.

Monk

You’ve done well.

Judas

Have you got it man?

Monk

We always keep our agreements.

The Monk produces a bag of some sort of drug. Judas grabs it and runs away.
The Van leaves. Trajan and Lucila speed after Judas.

EXT. ALLY - NIGHT

Judas finding a private spot kneels down and and takes out dirty syringe. He pours powder in spoon, then lights a lighter under it. It burns down to a liquid.

Trajan spots him, running up he kicks drugs out of Judas shaking hands. Judas like a mad dog scrambles for his fix.

Lucila picks up syringe.

LUCILA
So this is worth a man’s life?

JUDAS
Hey man that’s mine.

TRAJAN
You pathetic worm, what did you tell them.

JUDAS
It ain’t like he gonna really die anyway. Didn’t you hear the resurrection part.

Trajan grabs him off the ground holding him up by his shirt collar.

TRAJAN
He was your friend and took you in.

JUDAS
I don’t need nobody man.

LUCILA
Leave him be, it’s not worth it.

TRAJAN
We have to warn them.

LUCILA
It’s too late.

TRAJAN
I can’t just let them walk into a trap.

(CONTINUED)
LUCILA
Better them than you.

TRAJAN
What are you saying.

LUCILA
I’m saying lets get our life back.

Judas tries to get free but Trajan pins him hard against wall.

TRAJAN
You heard his words how can you turn your back.

LUCILA
His words Trajan, not yours. This world we live in cannot be like that, it never could.

TRAJAN
But to know the inner peace.

LUCILA
Peace, Peace, Peace it’s all a dream.

TRAJAN
I have to Lucila.

LUCILA
No you don’t.

Lucila produces a Tazer and Zaps Trajan. A look of disappointment on his face as he falls to ground unconscious.

Judas starts to run.

LUCILA
Wait! If you want to live.

Judas stops dead in his tracks and turns nervously.

A cab is approaching, Lucila steps in road to wave him down.

LUCILA
Help me get him into the Cab.

The cab inches to the curb. Lucila and Judas push Trajan in. A rough looking Cabbie behind wheel smoking cigar.
CABBIE
Too much of the festival?

LUCILA
Yeah, can’t hold his liquor.

JUDAS
What about me?

LUCILA
Get lost before I turn you in myself.

CABBIE
Where to?

LUCILA
The outer Perimeter.

CABBIE
That’ll cost ya.

Lucila flashes a large emerald ring at him.

LUCILA
That’s not a problem.

CABBIE
Yes Ma Am!

EXT. PERIMETER HOTEL - NIGHT

The Cab pulls into the dusty old Perimeter Hotel. A dust storm has whipped up, it howls. The hotel is haven for thrill seekers going on trips to the deep desert.

A hideaway to get lost and not be seen. No frills just a stopover with bed and shower.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Lucila cradles Trajan’s head. The cab stops

CABBIE
We’re here lady.

LUCILA
Wait right here.

She gets out into the full fury of the blowing storm and runs inside. Moments later she emerges and runs back to cab.

(CONTINUED)
The Cabbie gets out and helps her with Trajan to the room. She digs in purse and pays Cabbie generously.

CABBIE
Thanks Lady.

LUCILA
Could you keep this quiet.

CABBIE
What?

LUCILA
Don’t tell anyone about the fare.

CABBIE
Oh right.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The Cabbie gets Trajan in the room for her and plops him on the bed. The Cabbie tips hat and leaves.

She sits down by Trajan who is moaning in he sleep. Lucila runs her fingers through his hair.

LUCILA
It was for the best my love.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Sun beams through the cracks in the curtains. Lucila is snuggled beside Trajan both sound asleep. Then a loud pounding on the door.

Lucila awakes startled and worried. Thinking the worst she peers out gently folding back curtain.

She sees no cars or security vehicles then she strains to see around corner, it’s Mary.

She pounds even harder. Frantic. Lucila opens door.

LUCILA
What!

MARY
They arrested him!

Trajan rouses from the noise. Mary rushes into room and starts to beat on Trajan.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
(screaming)
It was you, It was you!

TRAJAN
No, It was Judas.

Mary collapses into Trajan’s arms crying. Lucila looks ill.

Trajan gives her a look. Trajan sets Mary down on bed. Lucila turns on TV. On it live coverage, a Reporter gives account of event.

REPORTER
Again the so called Son of God AKA THE ONE has been arrested. A lightening raid in the early morning hours captured this leader of the cult following at a local park.

A Commentator O/S asks:

COMMENTATOR
What about the rest of his Lieutenants, Peter, Andrew and the others?

REPORTER
No word, it seems they may have escaped in the confusion.

TRAJAN
I’ve got to get to him.

LUCILA
We all will go.

TRAJAN
(sarcastic)
What about us, what about our future?

LUCILA
I was selfish.

TRAJAN
Yes you were. How are we going to get there.

MARY
My van, I parked around back just in case.
EXT. HOTEL - DAY

An old beat up van with ripped up seats and a hand painted exterior. No air and held together with chewing gum and prayers.

Trajan loads everyone in then gets behind wheel and takes off.

EXT. JAIL - DAY

A small group of protesters line up outside gate. Guards walk a perimeter. A large viewing screen hangs from the guard tower.

On it, Jesus is on Trial the Martian Monks presiding.

Jesus looks fatigued his face gaunt.

Trajan parks the van and they all depart. Mingling with the crowd they go unnoticed.

    TRAJAN
    I’ve got to get in there.

    LUCILA
    There’s no way.

    TRAJAN
    They’re going to kill him you know that don’t you.

    LUCILA
    Capital punishment was outlawed.

    TRAJAN
    Remember we’re dealing with Marcus, he sees this guy as a threat to his authority. He will execute him unless we can get him out.

    MARY
    Maybe a distraction.

    TRAJAN
    It’ll have to be a good one.

    MARY
    Come on.

They return to van Mary rips part of her blouse off. Then she opens gas tank lid and places cloth in hole.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Got a lighter?

LUCILA
Here.

TRAJAN
When did you start smoking?

LUCILA
The day you disappeared.

Mary lights cloth.

MARY
Run!

They take off towards the gate reaching it moments before the explosion. The Van is hurled into the air. The Prison RAID Klaxon sounds, guards react pulling out weapons. People run in all directions.

Trajan takes his chance and scales the fence, he dashes for the inside.

Mary and Lucila huddle together out of sight.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Trajan makes his way down the steal corridor. Using only his nose as a guide. The Prison is Strangely quiet and deserted.

Stealth fully he maneuvers around corner. Some guards appear crossing an adjacent corridor. They push Jesus in front of them, he stumbles. The guards kick him to his feet.

Trajan notices he’s been badly beaten, anger rises in him.

He takes action moving in behind them. He grabs first Guard silently breaking his neck. He goes for the other, but the Guard is too quick they wrestle for gun it falls to ground.

JESUS
Trajan no! It is my destiny!

With that Marcus appears from around the corner with a host of guards around him. He smiles like the cat who ate the Canary.

MARCUS
Ask and you shall receive.

The guards immediately take Trajan into custody.
MARCUS
Here I thought I had lost you forever and what do you do? Walk straight into Prison.

TRAJAN
Let him go Marcus.

MARCUS
Oh he’s not going anywhere. The Monks and I declare him a heretic denying the Gods.

TRAJAN
There is only one true God.

MARCUS
You sound like a Parrot! There is only One True God, There is only one true God—quit droning on about it.

TRAJAN
I curse the day I ever called you friend.

MARCUS
I need no friends. Take him away.

Trajan struggles to free himself but to no avail. The Guards drag him away.

EXT. PRISON — DAY
Order has been restored most of the protesters have been dispersed. Lucila and Mary remain out of sight.

MARY
What’s happening? Where’s Trajan?

LUCILA
I don’t know, but we can’t stay.

MARY
No I’m not leaving the Master.

LUCILA
Trajan will find him, now we need to go.

Reluctantly Mary agrees.
EXT. STREET - DAY

The atmosphere on the street is indifferent. Mary and Lucila wander aimlessly waiting for Trajan.

Ahead a crowd has gathered at a large viewing screen. On it a reporter on the scene inside prison addresses the news.

REPORTER
A failed breakout attempt was thwarted by security forces. WE have a report someone has been taken into custody, but no word of who or what condition they are in. The Execution of the cult leader turned traitor is scheduled for three o’clock today. WE will be covering that live.

MARY
Three! What time is it now?

Lucila glances at her watch and shows to Mary, it’s three on the nose. The view screen switches to the execution chamber. Jesus is lead in and strapped to the lethal injection table.

The needles are inserted in to Jesus arm. The injection table is raised to an upright position. With arms outstretched it resembles a cross.

The warden enters the room.

WARDEN
Any last words.

JESUS
Father forgive them, they no not what they do.

The Warden glances to the viewing booth. He nods head and throws switch on wall.

Mary is wailing, the crowd is somber watching the event. Lucila cradles Mary.

On screen Jesus twitches a little then stops. A Doctor comes in and examines him. Then nods head, it’s all over.

REPORTER
There you have it, the Cult leader calling himself THE ONE is dead.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
(screaming)
NOOOOOOOOO!

Over head clouds gather into thick rolling black boil. Thunder claps and lightening flashes. The wind whips up to full fury.

Lucila holds onto Mary watching sky in fear.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Marcus steps out onto the covered breezeway of Prison. The sky is black as midnight. The wind howls, dust blows everywhere. More lightening and thunder.

Marcus looks a little nervous. A guard beside him is about to loose it.

GUARD
Maybe he was what he said.

MARCUS
Your frightened by the wind.

Marcus covers his head with cloak and proceeds to awaiting limo.

INT. PRISON JAIL CELL - DAY

Trajan strapped securely on bunk, beats his head lightly against wall for failing. He looks out window at storm.

The cell door opens, in steps Joshua and another guard. He wheels in some medical equipment.

TRAJAN
Who are you?

Joshua doesn’t answer him.

JOSHUA
(to guard)
Hold his head.

The Guard quickly gets Trajan in a headlock. Joshua produces an Ear Otoscope, he looks in Trajan’s ear then squeezes a little trigger on the device.

Something shoots in Trajan’s head, it produces a ringing sensation. Trajan winces.

(CONTINUED)
TRAJAN
What did you do to me?

Again Joshua doesn’t answer and simply leaves the room. Trajan’s head is spinning he passes out on cot.

EXT. MORGUE - NIGHT

A cab pulls to stop in front of morgue the rain continues to pour down. Lucila and Mary exit cab and walk up steps.

LUCILA
It may be risky for you let me go first. I still have my Imperial ID License maybe Marcus hasn’t canceled it.

MARY
No, we go together.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

The Night station nurse goes over some paperwork. Lucila and Mary proceed to his desk. The nurse, a husky Black Man is intent on his work.

LUCILA
Excuse me, we are family of The One.

MARY
We’d like to see his body.

NURSE
Got any ID?

Lucila fumbles through her purse extracting her imperial ID License. The Nurse looks at it, impressed.

NURSE
Family of yours?

LUCILA
More like a friend, this is his sister.

NURSE
Okay come with me.

They walk down small hall to Morgue Freezers.
INT. MORGUE FREEZER ROOM - NIGHT

About a dozen freezer units line the wall. The Nurse opens one in middle and slides out covered corpse of Jesus.

He peels blanket back revealing face and upper torso.

Jesus face is badly bruised.

LUCILA
They tortured him.

NURSE
I’ll give you guys a moment.

LUCILA
Make arrangements for body to be sent here.

She produces a piece of paper with directions to cemetery.

NURSE
But I have orders for him to remain here.

LUCILA
I’ll change that.

Summoning up all her courage she pulls out her cell phone.

INT. MARS IMPERIAL ESTATE/MORGUE - NIGHT

Marcus sits alone in his study all full of himself, he’s had a good day. He sips a whiskey and props his feet up on desk.

His cell phone buzzes on his desk, looking at caller ID:

LUCILA

MARCUS
Where are you?

LUCILA
I’m at the Morgue. I want you to release the Body.

MARCUS
Oh hell no, and have some martyrs grave for people to make a pilgrimage to.
LUCILA
Do this one decent thing and I will come back.

MARCUS
What of Trajan?

He’s playing with her and she knows it.

LUCILA
I know you have him in custody.

MARCUS
What if I do?

LUCILA
Drop the charges and let him go.

MARCUS
You are making quite the demands. I could charge you with aiding and abetting a known felon.

LUCILA
But you won’t. It’s me you want.

MARCUS
Clever girl, I harm him you hate me. If I let him go then there is a chance, maybe?

LUCILA
Maybe, Marcus.

MARCUS
Let me speak to the Station nurse.

Lucila hands phone to Nurse.

NURSE
Yes Sir right away.

EXT. MORGUE - EARLY MORNING

The sun is just breaking above the horizon the city is still. A hearse waits outside as Jesus Body is brought out and loaded in.

The rain has stopped Lucila and Mary get into cab. The small little funeral procession moves on.
EXT. MARTIAN CEMETERY - MORNING

The Cemetery founded when the Martian colonies were young is large. Many of the older tombs were carved out of the red rock facing cliffs. Now these older tombs have come into disrepair allowing poorer families a place to lay their loved ones. If you have the money, one can be arranged.

Lucila bargains with one of the grounds keepers, he motions her to follow him.

They wind their way to the back of the cemetery. One of the tombs is open and being cleaned.

Lucila inspects it and pays the man. The Funeral Director and attendants carry coffin inside.

A Military van approaches it stops in front of tomb. Two Armed Praetorian Guards get out.

    LUCILA
    What is this?

    PRAETORIAN 1
    Security Mam.

    PRAETORIAN 2
    The Emperor wants it guarded so no one will steal the body.

Lucila agrees. The Groundskeeper seals tomb with concrete and stone. Mary and Lucila wipe their eyes and leave.

INT. DINER - DAY

Mary and Lucila sit at a booth in an average eating establishment. The kind designed for local workers, it has seen it’s better days.

Mary just picks at her food, Lucila eats with a coming appetite.

    LUCILA
    You have to eat something.

    MARY
    I can’t believe how the others abandoned him.

    LUCILA
    Just human nature.
MARY
But Peter and Andrew. They were there from the beginning.

LUCILA
Weren’t you?

MARY
Me?

LUCILA
I just thought you and he were — you know.

MARY
No, nothing like that. Although that was what I did to get by.

LUCILA
What changed?

MARY
The Master found me. I was strung out on drugs and I had just robbed a little old lady, but I wasn’t very good.

(pause, slight laugh)
She started beating me over the head with her cane. I thought she was going to kill me. Then the Master happened by and calmed her down, with one look from him she forgave me. He told me that if I believed in him all sins would be forgiven. That’s all it took and here I am now clean and sober.

LUCILA
And here you are now.

MARY
You do not really believe in him?

LUCILA
I’m not sure.

The chime rings on the entrance opening. Lucila looks up from her coffee. She blinks twice it’s Trajan.

Lucila jumps from the booth and throws herself into Trajan’s arms. She kisses him all over, but it’s bittersweet.
LUCILA
Are you okay?

TRAJAN
Great never better. For some reason Marcus just let me go.

LUCILA
I know.

TRAJAN
What?!

LUCILA
I told him I would marry him if you were released.

TRAJAN
How could you?

LUCILA
We were never going to be safe, I had to.

Trajan sits down with them a little stunned but reserved. Now he seems agreeable.

TRAJAN
Maybe it is for the best.

LUCILA
(disturbed)
Yes it is but I thought-

TRAJAN
No, it’s okay I really want to pursue this Gladiator thing.

LUCILA
But it’s so dangerous.

TRAJAN
I’ve been promised a forty million dollar contract.

LUCILA
The Gods have smiled on you then.

TRAJAN
Yeah my first gig is tomorrow. The closing games of the Festival of Mars. It’s going to be big and I’m the headliner.

(CONTINUED)
LUCILA
What is it?

TRAJAN
I’m starving.

Trajan motions for the waitress.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Lucila is beside Trajan in bed but awake. Mary is in opposite bed tossing and turning.

Lucila gets up and goes to window. Pulling curtains back she sees lots of police vehicles going back and forth. A little curiosity crosses her face.

She glances back at her sleeping man with sadness.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The morning sun beams through the curtains. Shining on Lucila’s face she wakens. Mary is sitting on edge of bed, still shell shocked from the past couple of days.

LUCILA
Good morning.

MARY
I’ve got to go.

LUCILA
Where?

MARY
The tomb, I’ve just got to see it one more time.

LUCILA
(sympathetic)
Okay, but I’ll go with you.

She glances back at Trajan still sleeping.

MARY
We’ll be back before he wakes.
INT/EXT. CAB - DAY

Lucila looks out at the never ending sand. The air between Mary and herself is somber. The cab enters the graveyard gates, the groundskeeper waves them through. The Cab stops at rise just below tomb.

Lucila gets out first, Mary slides across seat.

They trudge up the hill towards the tomb they are appalled at what they find. The tomb is open and the Guards are gone. Mary can’t move, Lucila run’s inside tomb.

INT/EXT TOMB - DAY

Jesus body is gone! Suddenly a voice from behind. Lucila turns, there sitting at the opening is a young boy (10). Blond hair, dressed in simple white t-shirt, jeans and tennis shoes.

He’s making circles in the sand with a stick.

BOY
The one you seek is not here.

LUCILA
I can see that were is the body?

Mary stands outside the tomb crying. Unable to go in she stoops down and looks inside she sees the boy.

BOY
Why are you crying?

MARY
Where have you taken him?

VOICE (O.S.)
Who is it you are looking for?

Mary turns the sun is in her eyes she can barely make out who it is. She squints thinking it’s Ground Keeper.

MARY
You should know, the man we buried here two days ago.
(pause)
Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.
VOICE
Mary.

MARY
(recognizing)
Master it is you.

JESUS
Do not hold onto me now, go tell the others I have not yet risen to my Father.

Turning quickly to tomb.

MARRY
Lucila! come quick.

Lucila comes running out.

LUCILA
Marcus has taken the body.

MARY
No he hasn’t, look he is here.

LUCILA
There’s no one.

Mary swirls around there’s nothing, only the sound of the wind.

MARY
He was right here. He has risen, just like he said he would.

LUCILA
No sweetheart, it was Marcus he didn’t want a Martyrs grave.

MARY
No your wrong I feel it. I have to tell the others.

She and Lucila take off for the cab.

EXT. STREET – DAY

The cab stops at a busy intersection Mary jumps out slamming door excited. Mary hollers back at Lucila.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
I will call you later.

LUCILA
(to Cab Driver)
Hotel please.

INT HOTEL ROOM/IMPERIAL RESIDENCE - DAY

Lucila opens door and enters calling for Trajan. The room is empty, she goes to bathroom. The phone rings she answers it.

LUCILA
Trajan, baby where are you?

MARCUS
No Trajan, but you can call me Baby.

LUCILA
What have you done with the Body?

MARCUS
What body?

LUCILA
You know exactly what I mean, Jesus, he’s gone.

MARCUS
I posted guards just so that wouldn’t happen!

LUCILA
Well he is.

MARCUS
By the Gods now they will believe his lies. It’s a good thing I took proactive steps.

LUCILA
Proactive steps?

MARCUS
Something special for the closing games. I want you there, remember our agreement.

LUCILA
Yes.
She looks out window an IMPERIAL LIMO escorted by several security vehicles enter Hotel parking lot. Lucila regretfully hangs up phone.

INT. ARENA IMPERIAL BOX - NIGHT

Lucila is dressed to the nines, fine makeup and a gorgeous new hairdo. She sports lots of fine jewelry diamond earrings and pearl necklace.

Marcus sits beside her gloating as he looks out over filling arena. The crowd trickles in, it is a carnival atmosphere. Modern Music blares over the loud speakers.

MARCUS
You look lovely.

LUCILA
Don’t charm me, your no good at it.

MARCUS
Still a vipers tongue, be careful I could change my mind.

LUCILA
Don’t worry I’ll put on a good show for the crowd.

MARCUS
They love me.

LUCILA
They fear you and Your Battle Bots.

Lucila smiles and waves at the growing audience. Marcus beams and follows suit waving.

CRYSTAL BLUE Kiosks are giving out free samples. People line up for implants. Spectators clamor for new experience we hear some talk.

SPECTATOR 1
I hear you’ll feel like your right there in the arena.

SPECTATOR 2
Won’t it feel weird?

SPECTATOR 1
Na! I have a buddy who has one, loves it. Hurry up the games are about to start.

(CONTINUED)
The Arena is filling quickly, trumpets announce the closing ceremony of the Festival of Mars. Vendors mill their goods through crowd.

More and more spectators fill the stands in ever growing excitement. The Announcers bait the them with promises that CRYSTAL BLUE will give them A SHOW THAT THEY WILL NEVER FORGET.

Finally, the arena lights dim. More trumpets in a full orchestral crescendo, then dead silence.

A single spotlight illuminates Marcus he stands, the crowd goes wild. Marcus eats up adoration he motions for silence.

The crowd quiets. Marcus begins slowly.

MARCUS
Citizens of Rome! A new age has dawned no longer will we be shackled with special interest groups who line their pockets at the expense of others!

The crowd roars.

MARCUS
We will return to the Glory days of our distant past when the games stood for something.

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

The floor of the arena recedes back and a platform emerges, on it are several dozen of Jesus followers.

Dressed in prison orange their hands and feet are bound.

They are scared and shaking. The crowd chants MARCUS! MARCUS!

INT. IMPERIAL BOX - NIGHT

Lucila panicked, pulls at Marcus he turns, put off.

LUCILA
What are you doing?

MARCUS
Giving the games some real meaning.

(back to Crowd)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS (cont’d)
The Cult followers of the blasphemer Jesus have put a blight on our proud traditions. Today I offer them as a sacrifice to appease our Gods.

LUCILA
No! Marcus, NO!

MARCUS
Sit down my dear or I will add you to them.

The Crowd is now a Mob wanting blood, egged on by Marcus control of the CRYSTAL BLUE Chips. They are out of their minds.

MARCUS
And Now I give you a New God of the Games!

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

The opposing Archway slides up. A figure steps up into the opening then the flood lights hit him.

The Figure raises both hands, sword in one the Crowd cheers!

Lucila gasps.

MARCUS
Trajan!

The Crowd chants TRAJAN, TRAJAN, TRAJAN.

Trajan steps out into the adoring crowd.

INT. IMPERIAL BOX/ARENA - NIGHT

Lucila fearful of what is about to happen. Marcus picks up Mic.

MARCUS
Make it quick and painless one quick blow to each.

TRAJAN
(listening to earpiece)
Yes Sire.

(CONTINUED)
MARCUS
(to Lucila)
Now, watch as your golden boy turns into a killer.

Lucila can’t stand it. She jumps up and screams over the balcony.

Trajan moves closer to box and salutes with sword raised.

LUCILA
Trajan No!, NO!

TRAJAN
Those who are about to die, Salute You!

Turning to his victims he shutters his visor. At that moment Titus jumps from the stands into the arena.

Running with deadly earnest he draws his sword. He slams into Trajan with full force.

Trajan knocked off feet quickly recovers. He attacks with full fury. Titus blocks the oncoming blade. In a pleading voice screams.

TITUS
Snap out of it Trajan!

Trajan comes on ever more aggressive attack, attack!

TITUS
The Crystal Blue Chip!

TRAJAN
I don’t know what you’re talking about!

The crowd is roaring, their voices barely audible above the clang of steal.

TITUS
You said something like this might happen – the desert Remember.

TRAJAN
Shut Up!

They continue in their deadly conflict. Man against man to the death. Swords are a blur as each one tries to gain the upper hand.

(CONTINUED)
Marcus loves the added extra excitement he glances indifferently to Lucila.

Lucila’s eyes are locked on the spectacle

TITUS
Do you really want to kill me?!

TRAJAN
I have to!

TITUS
Why?!

TRAJAN
Because your trying to kill me.

TITUS
No I’m trying to stop you!

From the stands another voice cries out.

MARY
Trajan! Remember the Master!

LUCILA
My love, do not do this!

Trajan is backing Titus into a corner. Something begins to register in his head, but he can’t stop.

Marcus glaring at him keeping pressure on with violent thoughts. The crowd is Churning with venom.

Titus miscalculates a blow. Trajan takes advantage and thrusts blade deep into Titus chest.

Shock and begging eyes from Titus as he drops his blade.

Trajan as if a man come out of a spell looses all ferocity.

His hand drops from sword as he catches Titus from falling. Trajan hugs Titus close as his life slips from him.

TRAJAN
I’m sorry, I’m sorry.

TITUS
(gasping for air)
It’s not your fault.

(Continued)
TRAJAN
Don’t go old friend.

Titus stares off into oblivion as if seeing some vision we don’t. The Crowd has gone still.

TITUS
Don—Don’t worry, I—I see him, you were right if only you—you believe—

Titus sighs his last, his eyes dilate, Trajan gently closes his friend’s eyes and lays him on ground.

Marcus stands furious and screams into Mic.

MARCUS
Kill them all!

Trajan rips out earpiece and dis guards helmet. He spits at Marcus and turns and addresses crowd.

TRAJAN
Romans! Listen to me, the Crystal Blue Chips have been altered. You are under control of one man! (beat) A man so vile and ambitious that he had his own father Killed. The True Caesar Dionitian would not allow autocratic rule, Rome belongs to the people.

LUCILA
Some people you can’t control.

MARCUS
Shut up bitch.

Marcus closes eyes pouring on concentration. Trajan holds his hands to his head.

Crowd starts in low growl kill!, Kill!, KILL!

TRAJAN
NOOOOO!

MARCUS
Kill them.

Trajan falls to knees still clutching head. He feels for Titus sword, then in one final act of defiance stands and hurls it at Marcus.

The blade slashes through Marcus sleeve barely injuring him.

(CONTINUED)
It clanks to floor beside Lucila.

His concentration broken, he twirls to one of his guards and grabs his gun.

He fires at Trajan the Bullet catches Trajan in the shoulder slinging him to ground.

Marcus screams.

MARCUS
Let loose the Battle Bots! Kill them all!

It’s the last thing he ever does Lucila buries the sword to the hilt in his Back. The Blade protrudes through front of chest.

Marcus coughs up blood not believing turning to Lucila.

He crumples to floor dead.

With Marcus dead the CRYSTAL BLUE chip has no power the crowd comes out of their trance. Some are actually surprised at the blood in the arena.

EXT. ARENA - NIGHT

Lucila runs out to Trajan she falls to her knees next to him. He’s wounded but not mortally.

She wraps her arms around him.

TRAJAN
Help me up.

LUCILA
Forgive me.

He gives her a glance and she knows instantly he does.

TRAJAN
Got your attention didn’t I.

LUCILA
(small laugh)
Well, don’t do it again.

Trajan turns to address crowd once more.
TRAJAN
People of Rome! A nightmare has ended let us always be on guard for anyone promising more than they can deliver. We now have a better way, to find peace within ourselves.
There was One who showed us that way but we would did not hear his words. There are those among us now who know the truth.
(to Guards)
Release the prisoners! These people will help you. Listen to them.

Trajan scans the crowd he catches site of Mary who is beaming. For a quick brief moment he thinks he sees Jesus but then he’s gone.

TRAJAN
The words are true. There is but one God and he is with us always.

Trajan turns to Lucila she smiles and they kiss and embrace passionately. The Crowd cheers.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END