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Demetrius and the Gladiators

By Philip Dunne

Then, Christians, die you shall!

Go! Both of you!

Into your kingdom!

For the big fisherman.

(clap of thunder)

- Prefect. Where's the prefect of the guard?

- Here, sire.

- How long till sunrise?

- Two hours, sire.

(footsteps)

My lady.

(Caligula) Wait here.

Open.

- Where's Claudius?

- In his own room.

Doesn't your husband sleep here?

- What have you to report?

- This is very interesting, sire.

This is the report of Pontius Pilate,
our governor in Jerusalem.

- The legends of a Messiah have...

- Don't waste my time with legends.

I want to know one thing.

Gallio and the lady Diana...

Why weren't they afraid to die?

Perhaps they're not dead, sire.

- Not dead?

- According to their superstition.

Their king, this Jesus,
claims to have "overcome death,...

...not only for himself,
but for all who had faith in him".

These are his words as a spy reported them.

You mean those Christians
thought they were going to live for ever?

- Ridiculous.

- Of course, but the point is they believed it.

Therefore they were not afraid.

Everyone's afraid of death.

Take you, my dear uncle.

Are you prepared to die now?

Of course you're not.

You're sweating. Your knees are shaking.

Very amusing.

Death's one inch from your heart,
one little push on the dagger.
Shall I, Claudius?
If you do, sire, my knees will stop shaking,...
...I will not sweat any more.
I won't be half as amusing dead as I am alive.

The question is:

Would you say so, Messalina?
As his wife, you're in
the best position to know.
My devotion to my husband
is well known, sire.
It's the talk of the Forum.
And your devotion to your emperor?
Your wife is truly beautiful, Uncle.
Except for her ears.
They're shaped like keyholes.
Who are your spies at court?
Never mind. I'll find out.
Suppose it were true. Suppose this Jesus
had found the secret of eternal life.
It's only superstition, sire.
Philosophers have disproved the idea...
Philosophers! Their brains are full of mildew!
I have the power of life and death
over every being in the empire.
My power is as great as any god's. True?
- True, sire.
- Then why should I have to die?
Why should I have to suffer death
like any plebeian, any slave?
- Is that logical? Is it?
- No, sire.
Perhaps there was a spell.
A spell to make one immortal.
Like a god.
What have you found out about the robe?
- The robe?
- Yes. The robe.
The robe of this Jesus.
Tribune Gallio was carrying it
at his trial today. Where is it?
The lady Diana gave it to a slave

as she left the hall.
She said something about it
being for the fisherman.
Fisherman.
Yes, that fits.
One of their leaders is called the fisherman.
You're observant, Messalina.
It may please me to reward you.
I wouldn't let her sleep alone, Uncle.
No one in this palace can be trusted.
(Caligula) Prefect! Prefect of the guard!
He's calling for his guards
to find him the robe to bring him eternal life.
- He's mad.
- No.
Quite logical, when you consider that
most of the emperors go more or less mad.
Every emperor stakes his life
on the loyalty of the Praetorian Guards.
So if they can keep him alive at all,
why not for ever?
He nearly killed you.
Men do not kill what they despise.
Only what they fear.
Why don't you send for a slave to do that?
Or do you enjoy being on your knees?
With a tyrant, it's better to live on your knees
than stand erect and be killed.
And you have the blood
of the Caesars in you.
Rome was full of heroes once.
They're all dead...
...and their wives are widows.
(man) Our friends, Marcellus and Diana,
are with Him.
Let us not mourn them.
Let us rather envy them...
...that they could go joyfully
and with pride in the service of their belief.
Jesus spoke to us of death...
...the night he faced his own.
The night they took him before Pilate.
It was our last supper together.
After we had risen from the table,

he washed our feet...
...and then he spoke.
He told us that in his Father's house
are many mansions,...
...that he went to prepare a place for us there.
"That where I am," he said,
"there you may be also. "
Our friends are in our Father's house.
Some day we'll all walk that same road,...
...and at its end we'll find them.
Find our master...
...and his everlasting love.
- Amen.
- (crowd) Amen.
I know what you say is true, Peter.
But it's still in my mind that
only yesterday they were warm with life.
Young, breathing,...
...laughing.
- Now it's...
- They never doubted.
I'm sorry, Peter,...
...but I loved them so much.
Even Jesus himself on the cross
thought he was forsaken.
I remember.
Only you, of all of us here, have that memory.
You saw him on his cross.
But we all saw desolation
give way to joy, death to life.
Friends, while I'm away in the north,...
...Demetrius will be
my eyes, my ears, my voice.
Come to him with your problems
as you would come to me.
This was our master's robe.
He wore it when he healed the sick.
He wore it when he comforted the sorrowing.
He wore it when he spoke to the multitudes
as no man has ever spoken.
He wore it when he went
to the cross to die for us.
Keep it for me.
Keep it.

You saved it for us.

- God be with you all.

- (crowd) God be with you, Peter.

Good morning, Demetrius.

- You never make a mistake, do you, Kaeso?

- I'd know your step anywhere.

- Peter's safely on the road.

- Good.

- Have you had your breakfast?

- No.

Lucia will get it for you. Lucia!

Lucia!

- Where is that girl?

- Coming.

- Demetrius has had no food.

- It's ready.

Here's your breakfast. I saved you
some apricots. I know you like them.

- I hid them for you.

- Thank you.

If there was only one apricot left
in the world, she'd give it to you.

Peter gave me our master's robe
to keep for him.

- May I?

- Of course.

I never thought of Jesus as being so tall.

- Was he as tall as you, Demetrius?

- Just about the same.

You'd think his robe
would be made of silk and gold.

He was a carpenter.

All his life he'd worked with his hands.

- Like us.

- Just like us.

(fanfare and beating of drums)

By order of the emperor,

I am authorised to pay 20 pieces of gold...

...for information concerning the robe...

...which once belonged

to the criminal called Jesus,...

...crucified for sedition in Jerusalem.

Well? 20 pieces of gold.

The penalty for concealment is death!

Start the search.

Anyone here know of this robe?

It's said to be of homespun, red in colour.

Are you slave or free here?

I am a born freeman.

All the others have been freed.

Christians?

I'll have a look around.

Get back to your work.

You! Come back here!

(Lucia screams)

Why did you run? Why did you...?

Demetrius of Corinth. Assaulting

a decurion of the Praetorian Guard...

...in the execution of his duties.

- Is the decurion here?

- Here, sir.

The evidence seems impressive.

Are you slave or free?

Free, sir.

Mark of a slave, sir.

I was a slave, but my master freed me, sir.

A slave may be freed by emancipation before

a praetor, inscription in the censor's record,...

...testament on death of master

or declaration before witnesses.

- Can you provide proof of any of these?

- No, sir.

- Were you bought or born to the house?

- Bought, sir.

Where is your master?

- Dead.

- A Greek can invent a better story than that.

Flavius. Do you think he'd make a gladiator?

Look at the decurion's face!

Sentenced to be trained for the arena.

- Where is the master?

- Strabo!

- More prisoners.

- Open up.

You prisoners are lucky to be sentenced to

train as gladiators in the Claudian school,...

...rather than to one of the imperial schools.

This is the best. We have

the best trainers, the best physicians...
...to watch over your skins,
your health, your food.
We'll feed you well and dress you well.
You'll have meat at every meal.
Gladiators trained in this school are sought
after for the most important festival games...
...and also for
the emperor's private enclosure.
That's because we have an iron motto:
"We live well, we die well. "
Unchain them.
It may seem in being sentenced here
you're being sentenced to death.
That's not necessarily true.
I, Strabo, was sentenced here
as you are, but I fought well.
I won fame and a fortune, too.
And I won my freedom.
The emperor himself calls me by name.
Even the most famous of the charioteers
has to give way to me.
I fought 52 times in the arena.
I killed 52 men.
Perhaps one of you will do as well.
Come.
Dardanius here is the best of netmen.
You've seen his name often where the girls
have scratched it on the walls of Rome.
He likes the way we live here.
He likes to kill. He's a born butcher.
But he can have his choice
of fair ladies. Tonight he will.
And so will you
when you're ready for the arena.
Glycon was a king in his own country.
Now he's the king of swordsmen.
Learn to use a sword like him
and you may earn your freedom,...
...as he'll earn his very soon,
perhaps tomorrow.
You'll train with wooden swords
till you're ready for the steel.
(angry voices)

These men here will fight tomorrow.
Half of them will live.
Half of them will die.
They know it.
Some men who are sent here
don't seem to like it.
They'd rather live badly than die well,
so they try to escape.
Like this one.
- (fanfare)
- All his training was wasted.
He dies badly like a common criminal.
Try to escape and this is your reward.
Strabo, Claudius is arriving.
Line up the men who fight tomorrow.
You're luckier than most recruits. On your
first day you'll see the owner of the school.
Come.
My lord Claudius.
My lady.
So these are the men, eh?
I hope you drew up a better list than last time.
They know it's for
a special occasion, my lord.
Oh. Probus.
Dardanius.
Barak. Good.
Tomorrow is the emperor's birthday.
You men will have the honour
of competing in the palace itself,...
...in the emperor's private arena.
I expect you to make a good impression.
You are my birthday present to Caligula.
They'll do you proud, my lord.
Every man has sworn to die well
if he has to, to die with style.
I've also told them there's some special
entertainment tonight, thanks to our lady.
Say a word to them, my lady.
I'm sending you a feast
prepared in my own kitchens.
Rare delicacies from
every province of the empire...
...and wine from the imperial cellars,...

...packed in snow and
brought by runners from the Alps.
I can assure you the rest of the entertainment
will be... of the very highest quality.
Guard! Guard!
Lockthe gate! Stay where you are!
Mark him!
- Stay where you are.
- Stop him!
Stop him! Mark him!
Lockthe gate!
- The best prospect had to be a coward.
- I'm no coward.
Then why did you run? Bind him!
Messalina) Wait.
Why did you run?
I don't think you're a coward. You had no real
chance of escaping. You must have known.
This is a place where men are trained
to kill each other like animals.
- And men aren't animals?
- No.
We admire a magnificent animal who fights.
Why not a man who fights?
Because God didn't put man on earth
to destroy his own kind,...
...nor a woman to enjoy
their agonies as they die.
- Dog!
- Wait.
- What's your name?
- Demetrius.
You spoke of a god, Demetrius. Which god?
There is only one God.
He's one of them. This is very interesting.
A Christian.
- Are you a Christian?
- Yes.
- And you won't fight?
- No.
- He can't. It's against his religion to kill.
- We'll see about that.
- Strabo.
- Yes, my lady.

Put him in the arena tomorrow.
Messalina, he won't fight.
You know what Caligula will do.
I'm more interested in what
this Christian will do...
...when he sees that his choice is kill or die.
Here they come!
- Look, Dardanius!
- Sit here and watch the game.
- Watch me win this.
- Get on with the play. Ah!
You may see a few things you didn't
bargain for. These men aren't children.
- They know half of them will die tomorrow.
- I'll try not to be shocked, Strabo.
Your name is Demetrius?
I'm from Corinth, like you.
This is my first time here.
- Do you always eat like this?
- I don't know.
This is my first time, too.
And you're fighting tomorrow!
You must be a famous warrior.
I'm a potter.
Only a potter? And they're sending
you into the arena tomorrow?
You must have done something awfully bad.
I did.
I'm a Christian.
Strabo, ...
...when you were fighting in the arena
what did you think about the night before?
It doesn't pay a gladiator to think, my lady.
When you caressed a woman, ...
...was your mind on her or on death?
You don't expect to die.
You never think it'll be you that gets it.
There's only one man down there
who knows he's going to die.
You're wrong, Strabo.
When the time comes, he'll fight...
...because he wants to live, like any other man.
My lady, I tried to train him this afternoon.
He wouldn't make a move to defend himself.

And he was a warrior once.

He was brought to Rome

as a prisoner of war, but he won't fight.

Why, you...!

- All right, you're out of the game. Get back.

- He's out. Come on, whose throw?

- Mine. Let's go.

- Throw the dice.

Watch this one.

(laughter)

The stakes must be high.

They're gambling for a longer life. The winner gets me for his opponent tomorrow.

Venus. I threw Venus.

I win.

I won you, Christian.

Tomorrow you're mine.

Now I want to show you something.

Watch.

Is it true that when you strike a Christian, he must turn the other cheek?

Go ahead. Turn the other cheek.

Let's see you.

Anyone else?

I am no Christian.

- Who is he?

- Glycon, the Nubian.

My lord Claudius has been considering giving him his freedom.

Oh, yes. I remember.

Have him fight the Christian tomorrow.

That should make it even more interesting.

Listen to me. The worst sort of life is better than the best kind of death.

Forget your religion for just one day.

Kill him. He is no good.

Your god will thank you for it.

Thank you for what you did.

This god of yours.

They say he thought as well of a slave as of a patrician, even an emperor.

Can this be true?

It was one of the greatest of his truths.

No wonder they crucified him.

The gladiators have arrived
at the palace enclosure, sire.
Well? What have you to report?
The robe is no longer in Rome, sire.
The man who has it, the one they call
the fisherman, is said to have gone north.
- I've issued orders to...
- I want the robe, not excuses!
Find it!
I hope you've provided better
entertainment than last time, Uncle.
(fanfare, crowd cheering)
Senators,...
...my subjects,...
...my loyal guards,...
...we are touched by your devotion.
In honour of our birthday, a gift of 50
gold pieces for every member of the guard.
(cheering)
We will proceed now
with the marriage of life and death.
(beating of drums)
Hail Caesar!
We, who are about to die, salute you.
(Caligula) Begin the games.
(booing)
(cheering)
(cheering)
Get ready.
Demetrius. Glycon.
Take it.
There's one chance for you - a slim one.
- Have you ever used a sword?
- Yes.
Fight as hard as you can.
Try to kill me. Use your shield well.
Sometimes, rarely, if two men put up
a good enough fight, they let them both live.
Understand?
If they think we're pretending,
they'll cut our throats.
If they begin to guess, defend yourself
because then I'll have to kill you.
- Good luck.

- Good luck.
- That's Glycon, isn't it?
- Yes, sire.
Good. I don't know the other one.
A Greek. A most unusual man, sire.
We thought he might amuse you.
Cut hard at me, make it look good. Attack!
(booing)
It's poor, Claudius.
Your gladiators are too fond of each other.
It's no good. They know.
Sorry, friend. Fight for your life.
(cheering)
- Glycon, pick up your sword.
- I can't. You've won.
Look, Glycon. It's life.
Not yet. The emperor decides.
They want him spared, sire.
(murmurs of disapproval)
Cut clean, friend.
Sire, I'm a freeman of Rome.
- I claim my right of appeal to the emperor.
- Your rights are what I say they are.
But you may speak.
- I ask you to withdraw your command, sire.
- Why should I?
I'm a Christian. I can't take a man's life.
Very well.
Your request is granted.
- The Nubian goes free.
- Thank you, sire.
Christian!
Stay there.
Macro, go down and cut the dog's throat.
Take your time with it.
Let him die slowly.
Sire, is that worthy of you -
a man who won't even fight back?
What do you mean not worthy?
Are you daring to plead for his life?
I'm only thinking of your own amusement.
Why waste his death?
Make him a birthday present to your tigers.
I think I begin to understand, Claudius.

She wants him to have a chance for life.
I didn't know your taste ran to Christians.
It doesn't, sire.
Your eyes betray you.
Very well.
When the tigers are finished with him
you won't want what's left.
Macro, ...
...give him the dagger and come back.
Release the tigers!
(cheering)
(cheering)
- He's lost much blood, my lady.
- I want him to live.
- What are you doing?
- We will bleed him.
The blood of slaves is impure.
By letting some out he will improve.
Bleed him when his trouble is loss of blood?
Get out, both of you!
The fools. Who can be trusted?
I'll stay with him, my lady.
Get blankets. He should be kept warm.
And heat some wine for him.
Heated wine.
- I wish I knew how to pray to his god.
- Save your breath. The wine'll do more good.
- You're responsible, Strabo.
- I'll do all I can, my lady.
If he dies, I'll send you back to the arena.
Leave us.
- I understand I have you to thank for my life.
- Caligula would have wasted you.
You could become
a valuable piece of property.
- Why did you send for me?
- I didn't.
My husband wants to question you.
- Claudius.
- Yes?
- The slave Demetrius is here.
- I'm not a slave.
You're our property,
whatever you want to call it.

- Good afternoon. I hope you're feeling better.

- Yes, sir.

If you survived our physicians,

you could survive anything.

But it's hard to kill a man

who believes he'll live for ever.

- You do believe that, don'tyou?

- Claudius, come to the point.

Oh, yes.

The emperor is interested in the robe

that Jesus wore to the cross.

Can you tell me where it is

or the whereabouts of the man who has it?

Peter, I believe he's called.

No, sir. I can tell you nothing.

Caligula might take it into his head to

question you himself. He has his methods.

I know his methods.

And you'd die for this robe?

You're intelligent.

You can't believe it could cast a spell.

Only the spell of memory.

I took it from the foot of the cross

myself before he died,...

...calling on his Father to forgive his enemies.

He did that?

What men will do under

the inspiration of their beliefs!

I have none myself, none at all,

though my wife is a priestess of Isis.

I'm sure the Christians look on my faith

as debauched superstition.

- Don'tyou?

- The priestess of Isis knows what her faith is.

- We believe that love rules the world.

- So do we.

Then why are you such hypocrites? Why do

you pretend to be so pure, above temptation?

You misunderstand, my dear.

When a Christian speaks of love, he means...

I'm asking Demetrius.

Jesus said "Love ye one another as brothers. "

Tell me,...

...how do you manage

to love a woman as a brother?

You don't.

It's a pity you can't tell me something about the robe. It might even mean your freedom.

I can tell you nothing, sir.

Albus.

- Return this man to the gladiator school.

- Why, Claudius?

You might have further questions for him.

We could find useful employment for him

here among our bodyguards,...

...at least until he's fit for the arena again.

As you say, my dear.

Besides, when he knows us better, he might be willing to tell us more.

Albus, feed him,

then return to me for instructions.

Yes, my lady. Come.

Have you exhausted

all other sources of your amusement?

- But don't you find him interesting?

- He's a remarkable young man.

He has something that Rome has lacked since the early days of the republic.

Something to believe in: faith.

Our early conquests weakened it and

my family, we Caesars, killed and buried it.

Strange, if the memory of a dead Jew should bring it to life again.

Messalina.

Don't hurt him.

Don't destroy what he has.

- Are you going to interfere?

- No, my dear.

I never interfere.

This is your post. Don't leave it.

It's warm. Open the door.

Guard!

Pick it up.

Do you have a woman, Demetrius?

No.

There's one thing about your religion that still puzzles me.

Why should one want to live out

such a dull life for ever?
To be a Christian these days
is anything but dull.
My husband tells me
you wouldn't fight because of a rule,...
...a commandment, issued by your god.
- There are ten of them.
- Tell me about them.
They're very simple.
Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal,...
...thou shalt not bear false witness
against thy neighbour.
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.
And so forth.
Where shall I put these?
Back on the floor.
Tell me, are Christian wives
all so ugly that no one desires them?
I didn't say they weren't desired. I only
said there's a commandment against it.
A commandment against everything.
Don't look, don't touch, don't fight,...
...don't breathe, don't live.
Is there nothing human in your religion?
Well, there's no commandment
that says a woman can't talk like a fool.
Be careful, Demetrius.
My claws can be sharper than the tiger's.
My lady, the emperor
wishes to see you at once.
Come with me.
Do you know these objects?
Yes. They're my uncle and my cousin.
They made an attempt on my life.
What should be done with them?
- The penalty for such a crime is death.
- You have sentenced them.
Macro, take them out.
Sire, I claim my right of trial
before the Senate.
You've had your trial!
Let their heads be hung
in the Senate House as a reminder.
Go.

They said that I must die because
I aspire to be a god, because I'm mad.
- But you knew about their plan, didn't you?
- No, sire.
Don't lie to me!
I've heard who put them up to it.
There isn't a man in Rome who'd dare.
But you'd dare, Messalina.
You'd dare anything. Deny it!
- Deny it, I said!
- Sire, I didn't!
I'll give you witnesses to your treachery.
You, you'll swear she's guilty.
- Yes, sire.
- And you! And you! And you!
You hear?
I deny nothing, sire. But what I said
was falsely reported to you.
Do you deny saying that I aspire to be a god?
I said you are a god.
Isis herself revealed it to me in the temple.
Isis?
That I'm a god?
She said the gods themselves
look upon you as one of them.
I spoke of this wonder in the court, but
your faithful courtiers laughed in my face, ...
- ... the same who have accused me.
- Is this true?
- Is it true?
- (all) No, sire.
Liars! Traitors!
So, you deny that I am a god.
I'll hang your heads in the Senate House!
I'll have you torn to pieces!
Kneel.
Kneel!
Kneel to your god!
Some wine. There on the table.
Now you've seen it. Now you know.
Do you wonder that I behave as I do?
That we're all a little mad here?
Many innocent people
know what it is to be accused.

Innocent? Who said I was innocent?
Caligula was right.
I put those two up to it and they bungled it.
Oh, if I were a man... If I were Claudius,
I'd have killed Caligula long ago.
I'd have won the guards to my side
and taken the empire for my own.
But he's no better than the rest of them.
Where was he tonight when I needed him?
I had only my wits to save me.
And not for the first time.
I don't want another night like this.
I have a villa by the sea.
Claudius never goes there.
I need protection, and I want you
to come with me. Will you come?
Why do you ask me?
You said yourself I was your property.
I'm not asking you as my property.
I can free you. We'd be equals.
I'm offering you life, Demetrius,
and a great deal more.
Why do you choose me?
Because you'd never crawl to anyone.
Because you're a man.
Think, Demetrius. You're not blind.
Do I have to say it all?
For ten years I've been married
to a man old enough to be my father.
I've never been close to another man.
I've never wanted to.
I need you, Demetrius. I need your strength.
You don't need me, Messalina.
A woman with your wit,
your courage and your reputation.
All Rome knows why you married Claudius.
If anything happens to Caligula,
Claudius becomes emperor.
Since then, all Rome knows that a procession
of men has stood guard at your door.
Albus!
When the truth is ugly,
only a lie can be beautiful.
It would have been better

if you'd believed me.

- My lady.

- Return this man to the gladiator school.

Tell Strabo I'll send instructions
in the morning.

Yes, my lady.

White ball.

- Lycidas draws a black ball.

- Last week and this week, too!

Dardanius draws a black ball.

- He has a right to choose like the rest of us.

- He has a right, and I have orders.

Demetrius draws a black ball.

White ball.

- What do you want?

- This is Kaeso's pottery?

- I've been a while finding you.

- We don't sell at this hour.

I didn't come to buy.

You are friends of a Corinthian
named Demetrius?

What do you know about Demetrius?

You've seen him, he's alive?

Yes, he's alive.

He told me about this place and you.

I couldn't get him out of my mind.

- That's why I came here.

- Where is he?

It won't do you any good to know,
but I'll see him tonight,

- if you want to send him a message.

- Where is he? Tell me.

He's been sentenced to the arena.

He's in the gladiator school.

- Can you read?

- A little.

What does it mean?

It's the pairings for the combat tomorrow
in the palace enclosure. There - his name.

Take me to him.

To the gladiator school? They'd never
let a girl like you through the gates.

Please. I don't know your name

or why you came here, but please help me.

Please.

Here they come!

Lucia!

Who is that girl with Demetrius?

I've never seen her before, my lady.

- She hasn't quite the look of the rest of them.

- No, she hasn't.

Sometimes a man's sweetheart
finds out he's here and sneaks in.

Please don't be angry.

I took another's place. I had to come.

You're not angry?

Of course not.

We tried to find out what had
happened to you. No one would tell us.

I prayed that...

Oh, Demetrius.

I'm very grateful, Lucia,...

...butyou can't stay here.

- You must go.

- No, Demetrius, I won't go.

I have a right to be here.

Tomorrowthey'll... they'll kill you?

Yes.

I've loved you since you first came to us.

You never knew.

And I'd never have told you.

No, Demetrius. I won't letyou send me away.

These last few hours belong to me.

I've changed my mind, Strabo.

The Christian's not to fight tomorrow.

I'm glad, my lady.

Then he isn't entitled to entertainment.

Send him out.

- But, my lady...

- You knowthe rules.

Yes, my lady.

(Lucia) Demetrius!

- Demetrius!

- Stop!

Demetrius!

Get back, all of you. Backto your quarters.

You're wasted on that Christian.

- Forget him.

- No. No!
(laughter)
(Lucia screaming)
Demetrius!
Demetrius! Demetrius!
God, help her!
If you are a god, help her!
Demetrius!
Get away!
Move!
She's dead!
(cheering)
- Give me a sword.
- You're not fighting today.
I said give me the sword!
Let him have it, Strabo.
If you want to give the emperor some sport,
send these others out to him one by one.
Why, it's the Christian.
- Again?
- He wasn't to fight.
(cheering)
(cheering)
I didn't draw him, Strabo!
You can't send me out there!
- You know the rules!
- We've changed the rules!
- We go now, together.
- Come on.
(Demetrius) Not Glycon! Go back!
(cheering)
Sire, I speak for the guards.
The Prefect Cassius Chaerea may speak.
Never at any games in history have Romans
seen what we have seen here today.
We say that this man
has earned his freedom for life.
(cheering)
And we'd like to have a sword like his
in the Praetorian Guard.
You forget that these Christians owe
allegiance to another king, another god.
- Silence!
- Sire, the guards want a hero. Listen to them.

Ask him, sire. Put him to the question.

Christian,...

...do you renounce your false god,
this king of an invisible kingdom,...

...who expects to come back
some day and rule the earth?

There is no other king but Caesar.

There is no power greater than his,
in this world or any other.

By the mercy of Caesar, you are a free man.

(cheering)

Prefect, you may induct him into
the guards with the rank of tribune.

Tonight let him sacrifice in the temple.

Isis,...

...Queen of the Mysteries, Mother of Egypt,...

...Protectress of Rome,...

...your servant Demetrius offers you sacrifice.

Well, are you waiting for
your goddess to strike me dead?

What have you and I to do with gods?

I rejected mine because what he taught
was against all reason and reality.

Do you think I'll accept
this obscenity in his place?

We need no gods, you and I.

We have each other...

...for as long as we live.

There is no past.

No future.

Only now.

Do you see her, Claudius?

The goddess Diana.

Every night she comes to me,...

...to my arms.

There.

There she goes.

- Now do you see her?

- No, sire.

Why not?

Only you gods
are privileged to see each other.

Of course. What are you doing here?

You sent for me, sire.

Oh, yes.

I thought you might be lonely, Uncle.

Caesar is considerate.

We haven't seen Messalina
for nearly three months.

- She has been busy at the temple.

- How pious.

- Which temple, Uncle?

- The temple of Isis, sire.

Oh, no, Uncle.

No. Messalina worships this summer
at the temple of Venus.

Even now at the seashore

Venus is rising from the waves...

...and Messalina's there to welcome her.

Deny that she is there, Uncle,...

...and that our newest tribune
is her constant visitor.

Shall I take steps?

After all, I'm responsible
for the morals of the court.

Messalina is my wife, sire.

Any steps that are to be taken,
I prefer to take myself.

My poor uncle,...

...the tribune's so young,
so strong, so handsome...

...and so brave.

A hero of Rome.

I made him one myself.

Did you know when he leaves the palace, the
guards cheer him louder than they do me?

Did you know that, Uncle?

The first cup for thirst,...

...the second for joy,...

...the third for delight...

...and the fourth for folly.

(screaming)

(Demetrius laughs)

Glycon.

- Who is that?

- A man to see the tribune, my lady.

I'll see him. Leave me alone with him.

- You're the fisherman.

- And you're Claudius's wife.
- What do you want?
- My business is with Demetrius.
- This is my house.
- I know.

I was told, if I wanted
to see him, to come here.
You're wasting your time.

He doesn't want to see you.

I'm sure he can say that for himself.

You can leave now.

Why are you afraid?

I, afraid?

You'll never get him back.

What can you offer him? The company
of slaves and beggars, the refuse of Rome?
Poverty and self-denial?

Prayers, tears, death?

You see, I've studied your teachings.

And I, Fisherman, I can give him the world.

If he has to choose between us, do you think
he'd hesitate for one minute? Of course not.

And that's why you hate me.

I can see it in your eyes.

What you see in my eyes is pity.

- Get out!

- Messalina!

- So they sent for you.

- No, Demetrius.

My work in the north was finished.

If you found enough fools to satisfy you,
I can't be important to you.

Jesus himself thought
no man was unimportant, and no woman.

He was wrong,

as he was wrong in so many things.

You are no longer important to me, Peter.

I have nothing against you,
but what you say doesn't interest me.

So far I haven't said anything.

Then why did you come here?

Do I have to give a reason

for wanting to see an old friend?

He's right, Messalina.

We can't refuse our hospitality
to an old friend.

- Send him away.
- No. Not until he's had some wine.
- Glycon, bring wine.
- Thank you. I've already had some.

Ah, you shouldn't have done that, Messalina.
He's my friend.

We travelled from Galilee, persuading people
to give up their lives for a beautiful dream.
Take it, Peter. It's real.

Hot, spiced with cinnamon and cloves.
It wasn't made out of water.

Did you know that Jesus
could turn water into wine?

- That was only one of his tricks.
- Yes, only one.

Anything that was base, he'd make noble.
He found a leper and he made him clean.
He found death and he made life.

- He found you a slave and freed you.
- Get out!

Now you've won a victory over him, Tribune.
You've made yourself a slave again.
Let him go, Demetrius.

Peter!

I'm through with it. All of it.
Don't ever try to come back.

- I have no intention of coming back.
- I know you better than that.

You never give up.

You didn't let go of Marcellus until he died.
- You brought him to me.

- And in doing so condemned him to death!

But your tricks won't work on me
because I know them.

Tell that to Jesus the next time you see him.
Has he made any

miraculous appearances lately?

Walking through the Forum, perhaps,
or strolling on the surface of the Tiber?

Tell him what I said. Tell him, Peter.

He'll know without my telling him.

You talked to Peter, didn't you?

What did you tell him about me?
I don't discuss your affairs with anyone, sir.
You freed me and I am grateful.
You must have told him something.
I asked him if one who'd killed
30 men in the arena, as I have,...
...could ever hope to sleep at night.
Why did you ask him that?
Why should he know the answer?
Take your hand away.
You're under my orders, Glycon.
I forbid you to ever see this man again.
I won't obey that order, Tribune.
You are my superior,
but I'll choose my friends.
We were friends once, Glycon.
I know.
I suppose I should blame myself
for what has become of you.
When I put that sword in your hand
it killed more than Dardanius and the others.
It killed you.
I hope you sleep well, sir.
Good night.
Demetrius?
Demetrius.
Demetrius!
So, the mob can jeer me in the Forum,...
...tear down my statues.
Where were the guards
when these sacrileges were committed?
Sire, my men were under arms all night, but
we haven't enough to patrol the entire city.
Are you insinuating
that the entire city is against me?
- Sire, there's a shortage of grain...
- And I must take the blame for that, too?!
There's a shortage because
I've emptied my treasury for the guards.
They take my gold
and give me nothing in return.
These are my orders:
one more desecration of this sort,...
...one more unpunished

insult to your emperor...
...and every tenth man in the guards
is to be crucified at the city gates!
Post that at the guards' headquarters!
Sire, not the guards.
Your power depends on their goodwill.
- Don't publish such an order.
- I'm the emperor!
I can do what I please with whom I please!
The lady Messalina, sire.
Show her in.
You didn't tell me she was back in Rome,
or didn't you know it?
Stop there. Search her.
It pleases you to question my loyalty, sire.
I've come to give you new proof of it.
It must have been an irresistible impulse
to bring you from the seashore at this hour.
- I think you'll agree it's important.
- Speak up.
I have no secrets from your husband.
My news concerns the robe. The magic robe.
Yes, yes, I remember. Have you got it?
I know how to get it.
The man who owns it, the one who calls
himself the fisherman, is back in Rome.
Sometimes, Uncle, I think I made
a mistake not to marry her myself.
The workings of her mind appeal to me.
She leaves her warm bed in the cold dawn
to rush here full of zeal and loyalty.
Why, Messalina?
The robe, sire, holds the secret of eternal life.
Seize this fisherman. He's dangerous
to you, a threat to your power.
Dangerous to me...
...or to you?
Has this fisherman been making
trouble for you with your lover?
Of course.
You're not interested in the robe for me.
You want to get rid of the fisherman.
And you! Why didn't you bring me this news?
This fisherman comes and goes as he pleases

making fools of the whole Praetorian Guard.
I want the robe. And I want it today!
I'll do my best, sire,
but the Christians will protect their leader.
They'll hide him and the robe of their king.
It may take more than one day.
I didn't ask you for excuses!
Get me the robe! Take hostages! Kill them!
Torture them by the hundred till they agree
to give it up! You'll find one that will talk.
Wait.
There's one tribune who has
special qualifications for this duty, ...
...who knows their leaders, their hiding places.
We'll give Demetrius an opportunity
to earn the cheers he receives.
These are my orders. Go!
Guards, forward march.
Guards, halt.
What do you want here?
- Don't you know me, Kaeso?
- The footsteps I heard were of a stranger.
- I want the robe. Where is it?
- I haven't seen it.
(Peter) Perhaps I can help you, Demetrius.
- What do you want with it?
- To take it to the emperor.
- Why?
- To give you a chance.
Unless he gets his hands on it,
he'll wipe you out.
You mean we can buy our lives
with our master's robe?
It's only a piece of cloth.
And you'd let a thousand people die for it?
That's what you want, isn't it?
You and your god, ...
...who let his own son die on a cross.
Who let Stephen and James die,
Marcellus and Diana, and a hundred others.
The same god who turned his face from me
when I begged him to save an innocent girl.
- You blame God for that?
- Who else can I blame?

- Then you still believe there is a god.

- I believe in nothing.

Where's the robe?

You'll find it in there.

She's not dead.

No.

Lucia.

Ever since the night she was
so cruelly hurt she's been as you see her,...

...in some darkness where
her injured mind has crawled for refuge.

It's very strange.

No one's been able to take it from her.

It's as if, even in her darkness,
she finds some comfort in it.

- Get it from her.

- How?

How should I know?

One of your miracles. Wake her up.

Would it be kindness to bring her
back to remembrance and shame?

To learn that her sacrifice was for nothing?

That the man she worshipped
now reviles and ridicules his god?

You could do much for her.

Only you.

When she comes into the light again
she'll need infinite kindness, infinite love.

If you want the robe, pray for it.

Once you knew how.

Lucia.

Lucia.

Oh, God.

(sobs)

(Jesus) Father, forgive them,
for they know not what they do.

(crash of thunder)

Father, forgive me.

Forgive me, Father.

Demetrius, what...?

Why are you dressed like that?

Like our enemies?

I've been no one's enemy but my own.

Like you, I've been in darkness.

I... I had a terrible dream, Demetrius.

- I can't remember...

- Don't try.

Let me have the robe, Lucia.

You must take it to the emperor,
if it will save lives.

No, Demetrius.

Peter's right. There's no danger.

You'll come back.

You came back to me.

I said there was no danger,
but there is for you. Do you understand?

Make your way to the palace.

You know the Augustan steps?

Wait for me there.

I'll come out to you as soon as I can.

They're not cheering. Do you notice it?

Yes, sire. Your threat against them
was posted on the gate as they came in.

And they dare take offence?

I've pampered them long enough.

- Well?

- The tribune has returned, sire.

That's it?

That's the robe?

Give it to me.

Wait here.

Get out!

Kill him!

No!

Rise.

Rise!

By the power of this robe,

I command you to rise!

It's a fraud. You've cheated me.

This is what you asked for, sire. The robe
that Jesus of Nazareth wore to the cross.

You lied. It has no magic powers!

- No one ever said it had.

- It's a fraud, and so was Jesus.

I tried it. I had a prisoner killed.

I ordered him to rise.

- He's still dead.

- You did that?

You killed a man to test our master's robe?
Stop him! Seize him!
Threaten your emperor, will you? Christian!
Macro, get the armour and the weapons!
You shall kill him out there.
I took you out of the arena.
Now you'll go back to it...
...and die as you should have died long ago.
May God forgive you for what you have done.
My loyal guards,...

...by your sullen attitude you have questioned
steps that I have found it necessary to take...
...in order to preserve the imperial dignity.
Now I will show you proof
that my actions were justified,...

...that treason is everywhere,...

...that it has even shown its face among those
who are sworn to protect my person.
In your own ranks.
Let what you'll see now
be a lesson to all among you...
...who fail in loyalty to your emperor.
The instrument of my justice will be the
greatest gladiator who fought in the arena.
Macro.

- Put them back.
- What have you done?
- No shield.
- It's not too late. I'll go to Caligula.

Come on.
Don't let him kill you. Fight him.
We'll go away from here.
It doesn't matter you're a Christian.
I'll be a Christian too, if you say so.
Don't let him kill you, Demetrius!

(fanfare)
(cheering)
(shocked murmurs)

Watch, my loyal guards.
Watch him die.
(crowd shouting) Life! Life!
Let him live! Let him live!

- Let a traitor live?
- Sire,...

...the guards demand mercy.
They demand life.
Demand!
No one makes demands of God!
Claudius, stand clear!
No. No!
(uproar)
Hail Claudius.
(crowd) Hail Claudius! Hail Claudius!
Hail Claudius! Hail Claudius!
You have made me emperor
and I will try to serve Rome well.
I want it clearly understood
that I am not a god,...
...nor am I likely to become one.
Nor am I quite the fool that
I have pretended to be all these years,...
...in order to preserve my life.
That is ended.
You have made me Caesar,
and I will act the part.
Hail Claudius!
Messalina.
It's no secret from any of you
that I've mocked my marriage vows,...
...that I've openly disgraced
my husband and myself.
That, too, is ended.
I am Caesar's wife, and I will act the part.
Hail Caesar!
- (Demetrius) Sire.
- Tribune.
Sire, I've deeply wronged you.
You wronged yourself.
You merely disappointed me.
I give you your last commission
as Tribune of the Guards.
Go to your Christian leaders.
Tell them that as long as they commit
no acts of disloyalty to the state,...
...they will have nothing to fear from me.
- Thank you, sire.
- Messalina) Demetrius?
My husband and I wish you good fortune.