

The Diary of a Gladiator

The roar of the crowd still echoes in my ears, but I know it is waning. I have survived another battle. The weight of my armour presses heavily on me, yet somehow it feels lighter now, as though victory has granted me a momentary reprieve. Dust from the sand, blood from my wounds, and sweat from the struggle (the mingled traces of combat) all blend together, yet they pale next to the taste of triumph. My heart still thunders - not from fear, but from the sheer exhilaration of surviving to see another day.

I stand among the fallen - my opponent, once formidable, now a lifeless form, his sword discarded with a final, resounding thud. The arena, which mere moments ago vibrated with the frenzied shouts of spectators and rang with the clash of weapons, now feels hollow and vast, a silent monument to the brutality it has witnessed and the lives it has devoured. For a moment, I forget that I am merely a pawn in this brutal spectacle, fighting not for glory, but for survival.

But in this fleeting moment, I am more than their entertainment: I am a survivor, a testament to endurance against all odds, who stands defiant in the face of death.

I breathe deeply, savouring the familiar scent of earth and iron. There is no sickness in it today. I have earned my place. The crowds may clamour for my blood tomorrow, but tonight, to them, I am a hero - a symbol of resilience and strength. Tomorrow, I will face the sword again, for that is what they demand. But tonight, I am alive. And that is enough - for now.