

# Gladiator I

## Introduction

“It has been four decades since chariots raced and swords flashed on cinemas in epics. Now, director Ridley Scott (“Bladerunner”, “G.I. Jane”) brings the glorious battles of the ancient Roman arena back to the big screen in a story of courage and revenge.

The great Roman General Maximus (Russell Crowe) has taken the legions to victory on the battlefield. Now that the fighting has finished, Maximus dreams of home, to return to his wife and son; however, the dying Emperor Marcus Aurelius (Richard Harris) has one more duty for the general—to assume power in Rome.

Jealous of Maximus’ favour with the emperor, the heir to the throne, Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix), murders his father and orders the execution of Maximus—and that of his family to cover his crime. Escaping death, Maximus is forced into slavery and trained as a gladiator in the arena where his fame grows.

Now he has come to Rome, intent on avenging the murder of his wife and son by killing the new emperor...Commodus. Maximus has learned that the one power stronger than that of the emperor is the will of the people, and he knows he can only attain his revenge by becoming the greatest hero in all the empire.”

*Key words: Legions, power, jealous, slavery, avenging*

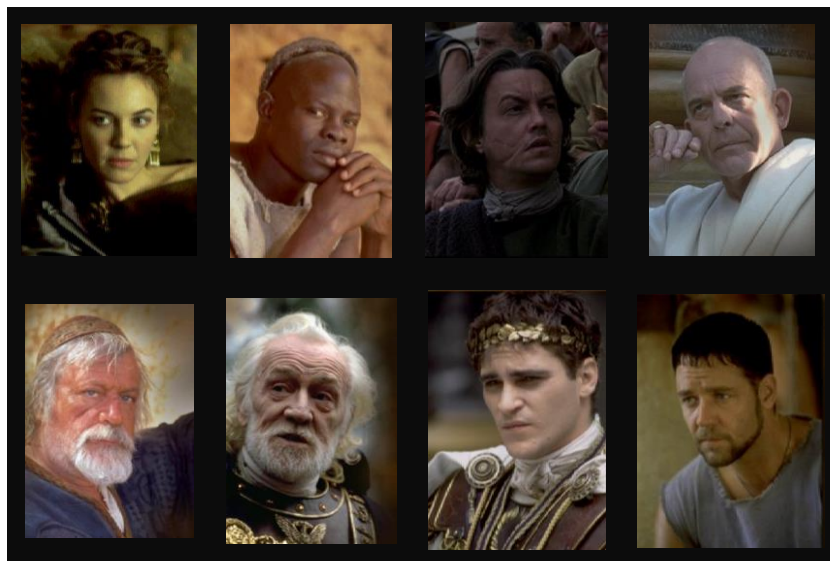
- What do you know about the Romans? Gladiators? The Roman world? Revenge?
- Have you seen this film? Do you know the story?

## UNIT 1: Chapter 5 “A Last Mission”.

### I Before you watch.

#### 1. Do you know these characters? Who are they?

Maximus	A servant.
Marcus Aurelius	A beautiful woman, daughter of the Emperor
Lucilla	A Roman General, favourite of the emperor.
Cicero	An aging emperor of Rome, tired of life.



**II Watching the video:****1. Which character says this?**

- a. "Why are we here?"
- b. "They fought for YOU and for Rome."
- c. "Rome is the light."
- d. "How will the world speak my name in years to come?"
- e. "When was the last time you were home?"
- f. "What did my father want with you?"
- g. "Will you serve my brother as you have served my father?"
- h. "I do what I want to do"

**2. True or false.***Scene 1 - Marcus Aurelius' tent*

- a. The emperor thinks he is dying.
- b. He has only had 14 years of peace.
- c. He has ruled for 2 years.
- d. Maximus has been gone from his home for 20 years.
- e. Maximus' house is in the hills. It is a farm.
- f. Maximus' has one more duty to perform. – become protector of Rome.
- g. Maximus accepts Marcus Aurelius' proposal.
- h. Marcus Aurelius wishes Maximus were his son.

*Scene 2 – Outside the tent*

- a. Max meets Lucilla, Commodus' mother.
- b. She thinks the Emperor is fragile.
- c. The woman loves Max.
- d. She is a widow but has a son, but Max didn't know her husband well.
- e. Max's son is almost 18 years old.

*Scene 3 – In Maximus' tent*

- a. Max prayers are to be home soon.
- b. Max's wife is a beautiful woman of dark skin.
- c. Max has clay figures of his enemies at a shrine.
- d. Cicero is Max's servant.
- e. Maximus believes he will soon be home.

**3. Now, answer the questions.**

- a. Why is Marcus worried?
- b. What proposal does the emperor make to the General? Does he accept?
- c. Does the General have a family?
- d. What does the General have at his shrine?

### III After you watch

#### 1. Extra. What sequence is this? Describe the scene.

- Who are the characters?
- Why is there tension?
- Why is the man nervous?
- What has just happened?



#### 2. Listen and fill in Lucilla's part.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: Milady.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: Many things change.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: I lost many men.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: To wish me well before I leave for home.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: I never acquired your comfort with it.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: I think you have a talent for survival.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: No. I am tired from battle.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: I will always serve Rome.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: I was sad to hear of your husband's death. I mourned him.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: And I hear you have a son.

LUCILLA:

MAXIMUS: My son is also nearly 8. I thank you for your prayers.

#### 3. Work in pairs. Choose a character and play his/her part.



- You know, I still remember you in my prayers. Oh, yes I pray.
- Maximus, stop. Is it really so terrible seeing me again?
- What did my father want with you?
- Many things, not everything. Maximus, stop. Let me see your face. You seem upset.
- It was not always so.
- Yes, Lucius. He will be nearly 8 years old.
- My father favours you now.
- Thank you:
- It hurts you to see my father so fragile. Commodus expects my father to announce succession within days. Will you serve my brother as you have served my father?
- You are lying. I could always tell when you were lying because you were never any good at it.
- True. But then you never had to. Life is more simpler for a soldier. Or do you think me heartless?

## Transcript 1

## Scene 1

[Marcus's tent where Marcus sits hunched over his desk, writing on a tablet. Maximus enters and Marcus does not look up.]

MAXIMUS: You sent for me Caesar? [No response. Maximus turns to look at the weak and old Marcus.] Caesar?

MARCUS: [Straightening up from the desk,] Tell me again Maximus, why are we here?

MAXIMUS: For the glory of the empire, Sire.

MARCUS: Ah yes, ah yes. I remember. You see that map, Maximus? That is the world which I created. For 25 years, I have conquered, spilt blood, expanded the empire. Since I became Caesar I have known 4 years without war - 4 years of peace in 20. And for what?

[He rises.]

I brought the sword, nothing more.

MAXIMUS: Caesar, your life...

MARCUS: Please, please don't call me that. Come, please, come sit. Let us talk now, together now; very simply, as men. Well, Maximus, talk.

MAXIMUS: 5,000 of my men are out there in the freezing mud. 3,000 of them are bloodied and cleaved. 2,000 will never leave this place. I will not believe they fought and died for nothing.

MARCUS: And what would you believe?

MAXIMUS: They fought for YOU and for Rome.

MARCUS: And what is Rome, Maximus?

MAXIMUS: I have seen much of the rest of the world. It is brutal and cruel and dark. Rome is the light.

MARCUS: Yet you have never been there. You have not seen what it has become. I am dying, Maximus. When a man sees his end he wants to know that there has been some purpose to his life. How will the world speak my name in years to come? Will I be known as the philosopher, the warrior, the tyrant. Or will I be the Emperor who gave Rome back her true self? There was once a dream that was Rome, you could only whisper it. Anything more than a whisper and it would vanish. It was so fragile and I fear that it will not survive the winter. Maximus, let us whisper now. Together, you and I. You have a son?

[Maximus nods.]: Tell me about your home.

[Maximus looks a bit surprised at the invitation to hear of his home, but eagerly and proudly describes it -- a peaceful happiness overcomes him as he speaks.]

MAXIMUS: My house is in the hills above Trujillo. A very simple place, pink stones that warm in the sun. A kitchen garden that smells of herbs in the day, jasmine in the evening. Through the gate is a giant poplar. Figs, apples, pears. The soil, Marcus, black ...black like my wife's hair. [Marcus warmly laughs with Maximus] Grapes on the south slopes, olives on the north. Wild ponies play near my house, they tease my son. He wants to be one of them.

MARCUS: Maximus, when was the last time you were home?

MAXIMUS: 2 years, 264 days and this morning.

MARCUS: I envy you, Maximus. It is a good home. It is worth fighting for?

[Maximus nods yes and Marcus rises.] There is one more duty that I ask of you before you go home.

[Maximus quickly rises, the soldier that he is; respectfully, to attention.]

MAXIMUS: What will you have me do, Caesar?

MARCUS: I want you to become the protector of Rome after I die. I will empower you, to one end alone, to give power back to the people of Rome and end the corruption that has crippled it.

[Shock and bewilderment overcome Maximus. He tries to keep from displaying these feelings. Hearing no response, Marcus continues.]

Will you accept this great honour that I have offered?

MAXIMUS: With all my heart, no.

MARCUS: [Tenderly holding Maximus' head with both hands] Maximus, that is why it must be you.

MAXIMUS: But surely a prefect, a senator, somebody who knows the city, who understands her politics....

MARCUS: But you have not been corrupted by her politics.

MAXIMUS: And Commodus?

MARCUS: Commodus is not a moral man, you have known that since you were young. Commodus cannot rule. He must not rule. You are the son that I should have had. Commodus will accept my decision. He knows that you command the loyalty of the army.

MAXIMUS: [Nearly speechless] I need some time, Sire.

MARCUS: Yes. By sunset, I hope, you will have agreed. Now embrace me as my son and bring an old man another blanket.

## Scene 2

[Maximus leaves Marcus' tent he hesitates outside, with a troubled look upon his face. Lucilla steps out from the adjacent tent. She appears to have been waiting for him.]

LUCILLA: My father favours you now.

MAXIMUS: M'lady.

LUCILLA: T'was not always so.

MAXIMUS: Many things change.

LUCILLA: Many things, not everything. [Maximus turns to leave.] Maximus, stop. Let me see your face. You seem upset.

MAXIMUS: I lost many men.

LUCILLA: What did my father want with you?

MAXIMUS: To wish me well before I leave for home.

[Again, he turns to leave.]

LUCILLA: You are lying. I could always tell when you were lying because you were never any good at it.

[Maximus looks back at her sharply and approaches.]

MAXIMUS: I never acquired your comfort with it.

LUCILLA: True. But then you never had to. Life is more simpler for a soldier. Or do you think me heartless?

MAXIMUS: I think you have a talent for survival.

[Again, he turns to leave. Lucilla laughs, wanting to prolong their time together.]

LUCILLA: Maximus, stop. Is it really so terrible seeing me again?

MAXIMUS: No. I am tired from battle.

LUCILLA: It hurts you to see my father so fragile.

[Maximus nods.]

LUCILLA: Commodus expects my father to announce succession within days. Will you serve my brother as you have served my father?

MAXIMUS: I will always serve Rome.

LUCILLA: You know, I still remember you in my prayers. Oh, yes I pray.

MAXIMUS: I was sad to hear of your husband's death. I mourned him.

LUCILLA: Thank you.

MAXIMUS: And I hear you have a son.

LUCILLA: Yes, Lucius. He will be nearly 8 years old.

MAXIMUS: My son is also nearly 8.

[Again, a moment of peace overcomes him as he speaks of his family.]

I thank you for your prayers.

[Maximus leaves Lucilla as she stands alone, looking after him.]

### Scene 3

MAXIMUS: Ancestors, I ask you for your guidance. Blessed Mother, come to me with the Gods' desire for my future. Blessed Father, watch over my wife and my son with a ready sword. Whisper to them that I live only to hold them again. Ancestors, I honour you and will try to live with the dignity you have taught me.

MAXIMUS: Cicero. Do you find it hard to do your duty?

CICERO: Sometimes I do what I want to do. The rest of the time I do what I have to.

MAXIMUS: We may not be able to go home after all.