

Spartacus

A lot of us have seen the movie *Spartacus*, or at least know a little of the story. Spartacus led a very famous slave revolt starting in 73 BC. He led his group of ex-gladiators through Campania and picked up many runaway slaves and other unfortunate refugees along the way. Eventually, his band swelled to over 100,000 and became pretty well organized. The consuls of 72 BC were fairly unsuccessful at stopping the revolt. When the group reached Southern Gaul, Spartacus had hoped that his people would disband and blend into the countryside, but this was not the case. Feeling that they did not have a home, they spurned on their leader towards the goal of taking over Rome. Crassus was put in charge of eradicating the ex slaves after Rome gave up on the consuls. The first blow to the revolt was when the outlaws split into two groups after a disagreement between Spartacus and one of his lieutenants, this lieutenant named Crixus took about 30,000 with him and was quickly defeated. Spartacus and his 70,000 made it as far as Lucania, where he was defeated in a heated battle with Crassus' legions.

Spartacus was never found and presumed killed in battle. The prisoners brought back to Rome were hung on crosses lining the Appian Way reaching all the way to Brundisium. Any remnants of the revolt that scattered after the last battle were rooted out and killed by Pompey later on in 71 and 70 BC.

Possible Discussion Topics:

- Sertorius
- gladiator training
- the REAL Spartacus
- Crassus

Scene I: outside the gladiator barracks

Spartacus rushes into center stage with another gladiator close behind. Both are out of breath

Gladiator (*looking around in a panic*): Are all of them gone?!

Spartacus: For now, but our fight has just begun. Once it gets around that we have escaped from Batiatus' gladiator camp, all of Capua will be after us. We must find others and have them join us. Our 500 gladiators are simply not enough to stave off the struggle that is ahead of us.

The two run off stage

Scene II: Mt. Vesuvius

Spartacus stands facing his fugitive band (the class); two gladiators stand two Spartacus' right

Spartacus: Friends, we are outlaws and wanted in every part of the Empire of Rome. Even though our numbers have swelled to over 5000, we still need to recruit more run away slaves and defectors. But, we have a bigger problem – if we do not do something dramatic, we will be hunted for our whole lives, so this is what I propose...

Spartacus pauses for a second and looks at each of his followers

Spartacus: ...Quintus Sertorius is a renegade general that is amassing an army in Spain to march on Rome and take over as dictator. I propose that we march to Spain and join him. By showing our allegiance to him now, we will be spared if he gains control of the Republic, and with our growing numbers, he will crush the Roman legions by sheer size.

Gladiator: This is ludicrous! We can't march on Rome! We will die!

2nd Gladiator (*putting one hand to his chin and looking pensive*): No, no, this is a good idea.

Spartacus: Unfortunately, I think that this is the only idea. You do not have to come with me if you do not want to, but I am marching to Spain. I cannot guarantee anything, only a chance. Those who are with me will leave tomorrow morning.

Scene III: battlefield

With numbers now swelling over 50,000, Spartacus battles with a Roman legion and takes Gaius Cassius Longinus, the governor of Italy, prisoner

Cassius(*on his knees with hands behind his back; facing Spartacus*): What are you going to do? Kill me! You have already defeated my legions in battle, I will be humiliated, so go ahead, do your worst!

Spartacus: No, I have a better idea. Since, you, Cassius, are an esteemed governor of Italy, I am freeing you to go back to Rome so that you can tell those inept consuls Gellius and Clodius that I plan to join Sertorius in Spain and march on Rome. They won't stand a chance with our 50,000 men added to the legions that he has already formed!

Cassius busts out laughing

Cassius: Ha ha! You idiot! Sertorius is dead! (*still laughing*) He was killed by his legate in a mutiny!

Spartacus (*puts his head down; looking shocked and defeated*): Send him away.

Scene IV: Refugee camp

Spartacus is again addressing his men (the class); the two gladiators are again standing to the side

Spartacus: It seems that we have a problem. All of you know by now what happened to Sertorius, so we have to decide what to do. I have heard that there are revolting slaves in Sicily; I say that we should go there.

Gladiator: Why should we listen to you again? Look what happened the first time! I don't know about this.

2nd Gladiator: What choice do we have? We are still hunted, and despite numbers of almost 100,000 now, we need a bigger army. We have to go.

Spartacus: Very well, off to Sicily then. I know of some pirates that can take us on their ships for a price.

One pirate enters center stage

Pirate: The price is 4,000 talents for your 20 ships.

Spartacus and the rest: 4000!!

Spartacus: That is too much!

Pirate: Take it or leave it.

Spartacus: Okay, how about we give you half now and half when we arrive?

Pirate: That's a deal! Give me the money!

Spartacus hands over the money

Pirate: Alright! Thank you very much!

The Pirate walks off stage laughing

Scene V: Italian coastline

Spartacus and Gladiator are looking out over the sea for something that is not there

Gladiator (*speaking to Spartacus*): Where are they? We've been waiting for days!!

Spartacus: They will come, they have to!

The Second Gladiator runs in from offstage

2nd Gladiator: I'm afraid that we've been tricked. A lookout saw them leave yesterday. We shouldn't have trusted those pirates. We are as good as dead now.

Spartacus (*smacks his head with his hand*): Oh no, this is not good!

End Play