

A Gladiator in the house

A play
by John Waterhouse

Excerpt

Set during the reign of Titus Antonius AD138-161.

The year is AD150

Cast :-

Gallus Sergius – 45 - 55

ex-soldier - an ex-soldier; loyal to friends, fair to employees and honest

Carus – 45 - 55

Banker; a lecherous, greasy character. Callous and immoral.

Pulcheria – Early 40's

Wife of Sergius- I attractive and dignified.

A loyal wife but with an independent spirit.

Livia – Early 20's

Daughter of Sergius - wayward and lively.

Resourceful.

Marcus – Late 20's

Ex-soldier-turned gladiator.

Down to earth and brave.

(NB Marcus is also called Decius but is known only as Marcus to the other characters for most of the play)

Proculus – 45 to 55

Gladiator owner; tough businessman but affable in company. Bumptious and brusque.

Liable to swear.

ALSO - Three Councillors who appear in the first scene are intended to be played by

other members of the cast:-

Titus

Flavius

Gracchus

ALSO – **Arrus**, who appears only in scene one, again to be played by another cast member.

Scene Listing

P.4 Act One Scene One Livia meets a would-be suitor while out with her mother, Pulcheria. **DAY 1**

P.6 Act One Scene Two Gallus before the Council of Ostia. **DAY 1**

P.9 Act One Scene Three Livia is going to the games. Proculus and Pulcheria discuss Gallus's appointment. Carus arrives and attempts blackmail. **DAY 1**

P.18 Act One Scene Four Livia frees Marcus from the Gladiators' cells. **DAY 2**

P.21 Act One Scene Five Proculus tells Gallus that 'Decius' has escaped. Gallus and Pulcheria meets Marcus. Pulcheria learns Decius's escape. Marcus narrowly avoids meeting Proculus and discusses options with Livia. **DAY 2**

Interval

P.32 Act Two Scene One Gallus is with Proculus at the baths. Carus tries blackmail again. Livia and MARCUS are at the baths and discuss their relationship. **DAY 3**

P.40 Act Two Scene Two Gallus plots with Proculus against Carus. Livia and Marcus plan their scheme against Carus. **DAY 3**

P 45. Act Two Scene Three Proculus visits Carus, in collusion with Gallus. Livia then visits Carus, in collusion with Marcus. The two plots are in conflict and Carus gets suspicious. **DAY 3**

P 53 Act Two Scene Four Marcus is with Pulcheria when Proculus arrives and he just manages to keep his identity secret. Marcus is alone when Carus calls, shortly after by Livia. Carus is knocked out after a fight. Carus is then by Gallus and Proculus into handing over the document. Marcus is a free man. **DAY 3**

Staging

The play was written with a view to being staged with minimalist sets, either with a black backdrop or in the round. The settings are as follows:-

The house of Arrus
The Council chamber
The house of Gallus
A prison cell
The local steam baths.
The house of Carus

At the premier production, a grey wooden box served variously as a table in Gallus’s house, a prison bed in the prison scene (covered with a Hessian sheet), a marble block in the steam-bath scene and a wooden chest in Carus’s house.

Another useful item of scenery is a chaise longue. In the premier production, two rostrums, placed either side of set, served this purpose.

Representational items are recommended to create the effect of different character’s houses. In Carus’s house, a painting of a nude woman is suggested (as used to good effect in the premier production) with items of pottery hung on the wall for Gallus’s house, together with theatre masks (a plot requirement for the final scene). Arrus’s house only appears briefly right at the start of the play, requiring minimum representation.

The Council chamber can essentially be staged with just seating for the three councillors, either representation blocks or chaise-type furniture. Alternatively, the scene can simply have Gallus standing alone, addressing the audience, with the three Councillors questioning him from off-stage.

For the steam-bath scene, a smoke machine or dry ice is useful for creating the ambience but not essential. The sound effect of dripping water as well as dimmed lighting are advised.

Other items that have been used to good effect include small stone-effect columns or statues.

Costumes and props.

No elaborate costumes are required, almost all characters wearing either togas or long dresses in most situations. Livia wears a short dress in two scenes and a

Gladiatrix costume in one scene, which is open to interpretation; a short skirt made of strips of leather, worn over a simple tunic, is suggested. Two cloaks are required. It is also suggested that Carus wears slightly less formal clothing than other characters. A simple tunic is all that is needed for Marcus, in the prison scene.

The props required are generally everyday items such as drinking cups, a wine flask and a tray of light food. Other small items include a rolled-parchment document, items that Pulcheria has bought shopping (to be carried on stage) and some dice and coins.

A vase is broken over Carus's head in the final scene. A breakable theatre vase is recommended but an alternative can be made using materials such as painted polystyrene or papier-mâché. Two theatre masks are also required, loosely hung on the wall, in Gallus's house.

Act One Scene One. The house of Arrus (a rich Roman).

Day 1, Noon

(Arrus sits alone plucking at a lyre. Pulcheria enters).

Arrus: Ah, Pulcheria. I think you'll find my mother in the garden.

Pulcheria: Thank you Arrus. I would like to introduce my daughter, Livia.
(LIVIA enters and ARRUS stares at her whilst continuing to pluck notes. He eyes her up)

Arrus: Ah, so this is your beautiful daughter Livia. She has a fine figure.
(ARRUS Looks her up and down)....Lovely eyes.and a slender, waist....but with good hips I see. (he puts down the Lyre)

Livia: Oh please don't let me interrupt. You're obviously a busy man.

Arrus: A ready tongue as well! That shows spirit. Why...er...Livia; What man would not have the time for a lady of your obvious charms?

Livia: Let me think; a sportsman dedicated to competition; perhaps a businessman with real affairs to attend to!.....or maybe, just a frivolous, skinny young man who needs to spend time building up his body!!

Pulcheria: Livia; this is the son of Port warden! *(ARRUS looks furious and throws down the lyre.)*

Livia: Oh, so that's why he feels the right to patronise me and observe me like a horseor a cow! *(LIVIA storms off stage).*

Pulcheria: I am sorry Arrus. My daughter's manner sometimes is.....at least not

yet....all that it might be.

Arrus: Oh please.....think nothing of it. The most magnificent horses
are often the most headstrong....and the most satisfying to tame! (*ARRUS haughtily
gets up and exits. Pulcheria is alone on stage looking decidedly annoyed*).

Pulcheria:(*calls off stage*) Livia!! (*LIVIA enters looking equally annoyed*).
I don't know what I'm going to say to Helena next time I see her.

Livia: Just tell her she has an effeminate son who really ought to get himself a
job!

Pulcheria: You were a complete embarrassment.

Livia: Embarrassment? It's me who was embarrassed, standing before him like
some breeding animal at the market being examined for possible defects!

Pulcheria: Maybe you should be examined.....by the Temple Priests! Wasting
an opportunity like that!

Livia: You call that an opportunity?

Pulcheria: Your father may be appointed magistrate soon. It will not look good
that as his only daughter, you remain unmarried. Now be polite; here comes
Carus.

(*Enter Carus*)

Carus: Good day Pulcheria. You should see the new ceramics in the market.
There have some beautiful pieces (*eyeing LIVIA*)....from Egypt. How are you this
day?

Pulcheria: Fine thank you Carus, We were in the market earlier...um...just
looking at clothes.

Carus: Clothes! And how are you Livia?

Livia: As always, just delighted to meet you Carus.

Carus: Hmmm. You weren't looking for something to wear for a wedding....

Livia: My mother got married many years ago

Carus: Yes, I know. (*he laughs hesitatingly*) I wondered if perhaps.....

Livia: Oh, did no one tell you? Because I've consistently refused to get married, my mother is putting me in the arena as a gladiatrix and we've just been looking at some sexy dresses for me to fight in!! (*CARUS is clearly amused. Pulcheria is very obviously not amused.*)

Pulcheria: Come along young lady. Good day Carus. (*PULCHERIA ushers LIVIA on, who looks back smugly at CARUS as both exit.*)

Carus: Good day, ladies. (*to himself*) Your time might come sooner than you think young lady!

Act One Scene Two. The Council Chamber.

Day 1, Noon

(Three councillors are slouched around drinking wine and eating grapes)

Titus: It would seem that there is little else to discuss.

Gracchus: Quintillus has the right credentials.

Flavius: Fat, pliable, open to bribes, easily influenced and unlikely to stand in the way of any of us.

Gracchus: He's as good as any of the others we've seen.

Flavius: Which isn't saying much; the man's an obese, drunken slob.

Titus: He sounds almost a bit over qualified! There is still one applicant we haven't seen.

Gracchus: Is there much point? I mean, is he likely to be any less greedy or fornicating than all the others?

Flavius: He does have the right to be heard.

Gracchus: Well let's make it quick.

Flavius: Who is he?

Titus: Gallus Sergius; a retired army commander.

Gracchus: That's all we want; someone who can actually wield authority.

Flavius: We don't want another little Caesar.

Titus: But the last magistrate was ex-army and he did at least know how to throw a good orgy!

Flavius: And was stupid enough to die in front of everyone in the process!

Gracchus: Come on, come on; let's get it over with.

Flavius: Is he actually here?

Titus: He stands outside.

(The councillors put aside the food and drink and sit in a formal line)

Flavius: *(calls to off-stage)* Send in Gallus Sergius.

(Enter Gallus)

Titus: Gallus Sergius, this council is now in session to consider you for Magistrate of Ostia. You now have the opportunity to convince us why you should be offered this position.....if you think you can!

Gallus: I'll do my best. I did have to dispense justice when I was stationed in Britannica.

Gracchus: So Ostia now needs to be controlled like the Northern Barbarians?

Gallus: Not necessarily. But this town could use a bit of military discipline.

Flavius: Against heavy drinking and street crime you mean?

Gallus: Against those who abuse their authority in running this town.

Gracchus: You mean previous magistrates?

Gallus: I mean all in positions of authority.

Titus: You include us in that bracket?

Gallus: Well, how would you describe yourselves?

Gracchus: How dare you!! Have a care Gallus.

Flavius: I'm warning you Gallus. Do you seriously want the position of Magistrate.

Gallus: Not especially. I know a lot about the law and I'm probably as well qualified as any man in Ostia to be magistrate but I would not ordinarily put myself forward for the job.

Flavius: Then why *have* you put yourself forward?

Gallus: It's a matter of duty really.

Gracchus: Duty?

Titus: I've not heard that word in a long time. (*GRACCHUS and TITUS both laugh sarcastically*).

Gallus: I spent twenty years serving Rome and Emperor. I know how men can be corrupted when put in positions of authority.....and I was very corrupted. Then something happened that made me start to see things differently. I had a good legionnaire in my cohort, name of Marcus; we were good comrades. One evening he killed a Centurion while defending a young local girl. He was sentenced to death as a result. That man's sacrifice of himself made me start to realise that some things were greater than personal gain. I spoke up for the Centurion at his trial and his sentence was commuted to slavery. I suppose seeing what he did changed my life.

Titus: A touching story but why should we appoint you if you think that we're so corrupt?

Gallus: I know you all value your positions as Councillors. If I were appointed Magistrate, all your positions would be more secure because you would all know that I wouldn't be plotting against any of you.

Flavius: Why should we believe that?

Titus: We've no evidence of your good faith!

Gallus: I'm offering to uphold your positions.....simply in return for a free hand to fight injustice.

Flavius: You might be genuine.....but you could also be as devious and self-seeking as all the others?

Gallus: I might be a fraud for all you know! You might be better off trusting men whom you know are corrupt like Quintillus. That's for you all to decide.

Gracchus: I think we need to talk about this now in private.

Flavius: All right Gallus. Leave us.....We'll let you know.

Gallus: I await your pleasure Gentlemen. (*bows and exits*).

Flavius: A clever fellow!

Gracchus: Clever? Downright arrogant!

Titus: But I feel inclined to trust him. It would serve us all well if he does what he says.

Flavius: Would we be any better off if we give the job to any of the other candidates?

Gracchus: No, I suppose not. And with him, there's a chance of protecting our interests.

Titus: Then we are decided?

Flavius: It would seem that Gallus Sergius is to be our new magistrate. I suppose we'd better let him know of his good fortune.

Act One Scene Three. Gallus's house.

Day 1, 3.00pm

(*LIVIA is arranging some flowers as PULCHERIA enters*)

Pulcheria: Those look lovely Livia. You would impress any young man with your artistry.

Livia: They brighten up the house.

Pulcheria: They certainly do. You're showing signs of becoming of a real homemaker

Livia: Supposing that I've no plans to be a homemaker?

Pulcheria: You will have.....when you find a husband.

Livia: But I don't have any immediate plans to find a husband.

Pulcheria: Don't worry; one *will* come along.....or be found!

Livia: Is that a new dress?

Pulcheria: You've noticed! Do you like it.

Livia: It's very.....striking. And you've had your hair done!

Pulcheria: In the very latest style.

Livia: It looks that Greek thing.....with all the snakes coming out of it!

Pulcheria: That's the style!

Livia: What's the occasion?

Pulcheria: Nothing especially. But I might be going out with your father later.

Livia: You're already going around like the first lady of the town and we don't even know if father has been appointed yet!

Pulcheria: Your father is a very able man, Livia. I'm sure he'll be successful.

Livia: I'll probably be out by the time he returns.

Pulcheria: Where are you going?

Livia: Decius is fighting today.

Pulcheria: Oh no; You're not going to the games again? It isn't fitting that you should go to a place like that alone.

Livia: Why don't you come with me?

Pulcheria: I can't go with you! You should be accompanied by a man.

Livia: I'm quite happy to go unaccompanied thank you. Women have to sit at the back in any case

Pulcheria: Livia, you may think that Decius is very handsome and.....virile but you can't expect to form a relationship with a gladiator, can you now?

Livia: Who said anything about a relationship? Unless.....he got his freedom perhaps.....or escaped!

Pulcheria: You need to find a *suitable* husband.

Livia: No, I don't.

Pulcheria: Most girls are placed in a marriage. Your father is far too lenient.

Livia: No he 's not. He just respects my own judgement.

Pulcheria: But you can't just decide everything for yourself. It's not fitting!

Livia: It's perfectly fitting.

Pulcheria: Look at Octavia! And Flavia! Both of them had husbands chosen for them and...

Livia: Lead very boring lives. Is that how it was for you mother? Was your husband chosen for you?

Pulcheria: Well, no....but it was different for me. My parents died when I was very young and I had to make my own way in the world.

Livia: I will choose a husband when I want to choose a husband. Please don't go on about me finding someone; it bores me.

Pulcheria: Well, I just *hope* that you meet someone soon.

Livia: I must go and must look my best.

Pulcheria: Just to go to the games?

Livia: And why not?

Pulcheria: In case you catch the eye of that gladiator?

Livia: Maybe.....You never know; *he* might ask me to marry him!

(Enter GALLUS with PROCULUS)

Gallus: *(to PROCULUS)* You're welcome to stay for supper.

Proculus: Thank you but I'm due at the games soon. Ah Livia, you have the looks and bearing that would grace any arena.

Livia: As a gladiatrix? Then it's lucky that I'm not for sale... isn't it! If you would excuse me; I'm about to get ready to go out. *(exit LIVIA)*.

Proculus: But I never suggested any such....

Gallus: *(laughs)* You must forgive my headstrong daughter.

Proculus: Livia has perception as well as looks!

Gallus: She didn't even ask if I've been successful!

Pulcheria: And have you?

Gallus: I'm afraid to say....yes, I have.

Pulcheria: I knew it. That's wonderful *(embraces him)*.

Gallus: Well; I suppose I did consider that I had an even chance of being appointed.

Proculus: Your husband has just been appointed Magistrate! Magistrate of Ostia and he speaks as if it's a setback, by Jupiter!

Gallus: The position does carry a lot of responsibility.

Pulcheria: But you are pleased aren't you Gallus?

Gallus: Not especially but someone has to be magistrate.

Proculus: Oh don't listen to him. He just doesn't want to admit being pleased at becoming the most powerful man in Ostia.

Pulcheria: We are going down into town later, aren't we darling?

Gallus: Oh yes, of course. Is that a new dress you're wearing?

Pulcheria: It is. (*twirls*). Do you like it?

Gallus: Most becoming. You look beautiful in it. And you've had your hair done.

Pulcheria: I have... and it's in the very latest style.

Proculus: What's that, the high priestess look or one of the Gorgons?

Pulcheria: Very funny Proculus! If you would excuse me, I'll get ready. (*exits*)

Proculus: At least someone was confident that you'd be successful Gallus! I bet you've not bothered buying new clothes for the occasion? Or had your hair done!

Gallus: You bet correctly.

Proculus: Oh well, perhaps a game of dice will cheer you up from your unfortunate success?

Gallus: Yes; that is an excellent idea. Some wine whilst we play?

Proculus: Absolutely. I'm feeling lucky today.

(GALLUS gets some wine and pours out two cups. They both sit at a small table and start playing)

Proculus: I say you were lucky today Gallus.

Gallus: Lucky?

Proculus: You had several chances with the councillors and blew every one of them, yet they still chose you!

Gallus: Chances?

Proculus: Yes, Chances; opportunities.

Gallus: I took every opportunity to express my credentials.

Proculus: But you didn't offer them anything?

Gallus: Should I have done?

Proculus: By Juno, this is Rome.

Gallus: We're close enough to it I grant you.

Proculus: In case you're not aware, it does pay to give influential people inducements....that is, if you want to get on.

Gallus: I've never been one for taking bribes Proculus; much less giving them.

Proculus: In the name of Apollo, and any other Gods who might be listening, you don't bribe the councillors, you don't offer sacrifices to the Gods, you get elected in spite of this and then you accept your success with....with indifference! Here, let me have some more wine. You'll be the death of me, Gallus.

Gallus: (*laughs*) You're too superstitious where the Gods are concerned, Proculus.

Proculus: It pays to be superstitious. You never know what fate has in store for you.

Gallus: My game I think.

Proculus: This really is your day (*throws down some coins*).

(*Enter PULCHERIA*)

Pulcheria: Have you won, Proculus?

Proculus: It's Gallus's day, Pulcheria. Not that you'd know it.

Gallus: Livia is taking a long time to get ready, just for the games!

Pulcheria: She's making herself up.

Proculus: Just to go the games?

Gallus: Is she meeting someone there?

Pulcheria: I don't think so.

Proculus: It'll be for Decius.

Pulcheria: How do you know?

Proculus: Half the young women of Ostia are tarting themselves up for him.

Gallus: Who is this 'Decius'?

Proculus: He's my best Gladiator and the biggest draw I've had in years.

Pulcheria: Livia mentioned him earlier.

Gallus: What's so special about him?

Proculus: He's tall, good looking, fights well...all the usual attributes that make a good crowd puller...but it's more than that. There's a romanticism about him. It's said that he gave up his freedom in saving a young girl. I'm not interested myself in how slaves come to be slaves but he does have a certain aura.

Gallus: He sounds quite an asset.

Proculus: He has been. With a bit of luck, he'll be killed soon.

Pulcheria: That's a terrible thing to say.

Proculus: It's business. Decius has been a good asset but if he carries on too long, the crowd will get bored of him. It's best he's killed now; he'll be remembered better. We have women in the games as well Pulcheria. You have an excellent figure, strong legs; You would make a fine gladiatrix.

Pulcheria: I couldn't see myself lasting very long as a fighting girl.

Proculus: With a bit of training and more suitable attire, you would do splendidly. Let me show you...if you'll permit me, Gallus?

Gallus - Certainly.

Proculus: (*standing behind Pulcheria and holding her arms*) You crouch...slightly to adopt a defensive stance. Keep your shield reasonably high.....prepare to parry a blow and then....lunge (*both fall backwards onto the floor*).

Gallus: Have you trained many gladiatrices, Proculus?

Proculus: It takes time Gallus.

(*Enter Livia, very much made up and her hair up and in a short dress*)

Livia: I'm going out now. See you all later.

Pulcheria: Right young lady, if you think you're going out looking like that!

Gallus: I don't know, I think Livia looks rather sophisticated.

Livia: Thank you father.

Gallus: In a barbarian sort of way.

Pulcheria: Sophisticated? You're the daughter of a magistrate. You look more like the kind of girl who's up *before* a magistrate!

Livia: At least a magistrate would see that I wasn't just a decorated object like the daughters of your friends!

Proculus: (to *PULCHERIA*) I think she looks all right.

Gallus: Just going back to Decius, aren't you grateful for the fortune he's brought you?

Proculus: Of course but he's a condemned man. I've given him the opportunity to die with dignity and honour. The least he can do in return is to get killed whilst still at the top.

Gallus: Well, I suppose that's a pragmatic way of viewing things.

Proculus: Of course it is. He'll be killed soon, even if I have to arrange it myself. (to *LIVIA*) You can be sure of that! (*LIVIA looks clearly shocked*).

Pulcheria: It's a terrible waste none the less.

Proculus: I'm late for the arena now. I'll accompany you, Livia.

Livia: There you are mother. I'm being accompanied to the games after all. See you.

Proculus: Good bye Gallus. Don't worry Pulcheria; I might be able to find a place for Livia in the games! She certainly looks the part! (*LIVIA glares as PROCULUS laughs. Exit PROCULUS and LIVIA*).

Pulcheria: That wasn't quite what I had in mind. (*exit PULCHERIA*).

Gallus: At last, a little peace. (*Lies down on the divan and eats some grapes. GALLUS puts his feet up and closes his eye. A knock is heard*) Oh, in heavens name, who will that be now? (*Looking upwards with hands open*) I haven't taken office yet. Could I not have a little time to myself before I have to out? (*Enter PULCHERIA*).

Pulcheria: You have a visitor. Carus, the money lender.

Gallus: Oh no. What on earth does he want?

Pulcheria: To lend you money, I suppose.

Gallus: Blast it; I suppose you'd better show him in.

(*Exit PULCHERIA, enter CARUS*)

Gallus: Carus! This is a surprise.

Carus: I just had to come round and congratulate you. Ostia will be so much better off in having an honest, upright citizen as magistrate.

Gallus: You're very kind.

Carus: Not at all. Ostia has so many devious and corrupt men, many in powerful positions. We so need men of integrity.

Gallus: I'm flattered.

Carus: But you *are* a man of integrity Gallus! You've been playing dice I see.

Gallus – I was playing earlier.

Carus: Can I give you a game? 100 sestertii a round?

Gallus: Very well. (*CARUS sits down GALLUS reluctantly joins him at the table. CARUS rolls first and they talk as they play.*)

Carus: The thing about my business Gallus, is there's always someone who needs to borrow money.

Gallus: Yes, of course. (*sighs*) Would you like a drink? (*offers CARUS a cup*).

Carus: Ah, thank you.

Gallus: (*pours himself and CARUS a drink*) Have you had much dealings with magistrates in the past?

Carus: From time to time. And not one of them who couldn't be bribed.

Gallus: I'm surprised that you welcome my appointment.

Carus: Oh but I do. You'll bring stability. A man will feel that his assets will be safe under the law.

Gallus: I can't see that your money would ever be at risk Carus.

Carus: True but some 'assets' are more perishable than money; especially people.

Gallus: So you're investing in slaves now.

Carus: Not really; just the odd one that comes my way. My latest acquisition was in part payment of an outstanding loan from a merchant whose cargo had been lost at sea. (*throws dice*) My round I think!

Gallus: - Do you deal much with Proculus?

Carus: From time to time. I did hear him talking earlier about putting more women in the arena. Do you think he might be interested in Pulcheria?

Gallus: Why should he consider her? (*GALLUS is surprised by the remark*).

Carus: If I put her on the market.

Gallus: (*laughs*) And how might you try to affect that?

Carus: By actioning my right of ownership to her, under the law.

Gallus: And in what..er.....sense....might you claim to own Pulcheria?

Carus: In the sense of ownership, under the very laws that you will soon be swearing to uphold. Have you never considered it somewhat mysterious that Pulcheria arrived in this town twenty years ago, alone and with a sizeable amount of money?

Gallus: Her parents had died and she was the sole heir. What of it?

Carus: Suppose that she was actually an escaped slave and the money had in fact been stolen from her master. (*GALLUS shrugs*) Fanciful? I have discovered the truth about Pulcheria's secret past and, by good fortune, have been able to buy the document of ownership to her! It's true; I can even tell you who her master....perhaps I should say *former* master was and how the document of ownership came into my hands. It might interest you to know that she was at the house of a wealthy merchant. (*GALLUS gets up with his hands on the table and glares at CARUS*)

Gallus: What?

Carus: (*he remains seated and relaxed*) I'm quite serious and please rest assured; I have full evidence to prove everything I'm saying! And don't worry, I'm not going to take Pulcheria from you but I do require some compensation for her. I simply ask for nothing more than....Livia.

Gallus: Livia?

Carus: A fair transaction. Your daughter for your wife. (*CARUS gets up and faces GALLUS*). I know you would like to see her married and under the law, you may marry her to whosoever you please.

Gallus: HOW DARE YOU! (*roughly pushes CARUS*) When did you last take a look at yourself? You think that Livia would choose someone like you?

Carus: (*composes himself*) The choice... would not be hers to make. Alternatively, think of Pulcheria's fine, firm thighs glistening in the arena as she wields a sword in a life or death struggle with an agile, nubile opponent? Think what appetising entertainment the crowd would be given! Wouldn't it be a crime for me to rob the people of Ostia of such a fine sight by allowing you to keep Pulcheria? (*GALLUS pushes CARUS again, who slumps back with a smile steadying himself with the table*).

Gallus: What are you saying?

Carus: It was just the thought of those female thighs glistening in the afternoon sun. I nearly decided not to go through with my demands! (*Carus composes himself again*).

Gallus: (*grabs CARUS by the throat*). Do you suppose that if what you say is true, you will live long enough to be able to extort what you want from me? (*makes to hit CARUS*)

Carus: I've taken full precautions. Kill me and you lose your wife! You see, I have the title document safely lodged with a friend under strict instructions to have the document made public with an order to sell Pulcheria into slavery....should anything unfortunate happen to me (*GALLUS roughly let's him go*). In any case, murder isn't really your style is it Gallus?

Gallus: Don't count on it! You haven't *proven* that any of what you say is true!

Carus: I will Gallus. You can be assured of that.

Gallus: I don't think Livia will be too keen on this transaction.

Carus: Then you will just have to persuade her that it is for the best!

Gallus: I've heard enough. You think I'm going to let you get away with coming here and blackmailing me? In my own house? (*GALLUS makes to grab*

CARUS but this time CARUS jumps back in time. GALLUS moves towards him and CARUS stand his ground).

Carus: Yes, I do, actually. Do you really think I would come here saying all this if none of it was true? I don't think you can think of a way to stop me. I've calculated all the odds. *(throwing the dice).*