

PICASSOfilm ORIGINAL SERIES

# WHERE THE BLOOD RUNS

The Untold Stories of Roman Gladiators

6x60'

Blood, power games and survival in ancient Rome. Discover the hidden lives of Roman gladiators. Uncover their origins, daily training, and cultural impact. This series is an epic exploration of the gladiatorial world, from its brutal beginnings to the rise of gladiators as cultural icons. Each episode offers a unique perspective, weaving together the personal stories of the fighters with the broader historical, architectural, and political context of ancient Rome. This series is designed to captivate audiences with its in-depth analysis, dramatic reenactments, and powerful storytelling.

### **Episode 1: "Born in Blood"**

**The Dawn of the Gladiators** In this groundbreaking episode, we uncover a story rarely told in previous documentaries—a tale that intertwines the mystical and the macabre. The origins of gladiatorial combat are far more complex and enigmatic than commonly known, rooted in ancient Etruscan funeral rites that sought to bridge the gap between the living and the dead. Historians and anthropologists will guide us through this mysterious world, revealing how these rituals, steeped in blood and spirituality, evolved into a powerful tool for political control and mass entertainment in the Roman Republic. The episode also delves into the diverse types of gladiators, their weapons, and the profound significance of their roles in shaping Roman society. Prepare to be captivated by a story that fuses the sacred with the savage, offering insights that have never before been explored on screen.

### **Episode 2: "Forged in Fire"**

This episode offers an in-depth look at the intense training regimens within the gladiatorial schools, or ludi, where slaves, prisoners, and volunteers were transformed into skilled fighters. We explore the rigorous physical training that built strength and combat skills, with weapons and armor meticulously reproduced and demonstrated by seasoned fighters. Beyond the physical, we delve into the psychological preparation essential for survival in the arena. Gladiators developed a powerful sense of honor and brotherhood, forming bonds that helped them endure the brutal realities of their world. The episode also examines their diet, designed to maintain peak physical condition, and the mental resilience required to face death in every fight. This comprehensive portrayal provides unique insight into what it truly meant to be forged in fire, revealing the full spectrum of the

### **Episode 3: "The Arena Builders"**

**Architects of Blood** Discover the awe-inspiring stories of the masterminds behind Rome's grandest stages of death. This episode not only takes you inside the iconic Colosseum in Rome, brought to life with an incredible 3D reconstruction, but also journeys across the vast Roman Empire to explore other legendary arenas where gladiator spectacles captivated the masses. From the towering arches of the Amphitheater of Capua to the grandeur of the Amphitheater of El Djem in modern-day Tunisia, and the ancient stones of the Arena of Nîmes in France, see how innovation met spectacle in these architectural wonders that turned gladiatorial games into the greatest shows on Earth. This is where blood flowed, empires rose, and legends were born.

## Episode 4: "Masters of the Games"

This episode delves deep into the dark power dynamics that shaped the gladiatorial games, revealing how Rome's elite manipulated these bloody spectacles as tools of political control. Far more than mere entertainment, the games were essential in maintaining the social order, with emperors and powerful elites using "panem et circenses"—bread and circuses—to pacify and distract the masses. We uncover the true meaning behind this strategy, showing how food and entertainment were used to divert attention from societal issues and secure loyalty. Meet the true masters behind the scenes—the lanistae who trained the gladiators, the engineers who built the arenas, and the politicians who orchestrated the games. These individuals wielded power not with swords, but with cunning and strategy, shaping the fates of the gladiators and the direction of Roman society itself. Through a lens of corruption and intrigue, we expose how every fight was a carefully orchestrated move in the dangerous game of Roman politics, where gladiators, regardless of their prowess, were often mere pawns in a larger, more sinister plot.

## Episode 5: "Gods of the Arena"

Step into the spotlight of ancient Rome's most adored and feared superstars—the gladiators who rose from anonymity to become living gods. This episode explores the phenomenon of celebrity in the ancient world, where a successful gladiator could influence politics, inspire revolts, and even challenge the will of emperors. We'll delve into the lives of the most famous gladiators, whose names have endured through the ages: Spartacus: A Thracian gladiator who led a massive slave revolt against the Roman Republic, his name became synonymous with resistance and freedom. Crixus: A Gallic warrior who fought alongside Spartacus and became a symbol of fierce loyalty and defiance. Commodus: An emperor who fancied himself a gladiator, Commodus fought in the arena and used his position to dominate the games, blending political power with gladiatorial fame. Flamma: A Syrian-born gladiator who refused freedom multiple times, embodying the gladiatorial code of honor and the complex allure of the arena. Priscus and Verus: Their legendary battle, where both were declared victors and awarded freedom by Emperor Titus, remains a testament to the drama and spectacle of the games. Experience the rise and fall of these icons, whose names were chanted by the masses and whose legacies still echo through time. This episode not only showcases their extraordinary lives but also reflects on how these figures have been immortalized in popular culture, continuing to inspire stories of heroism and rebellion today.

## Episode 6: "Hope and Freedom"

In the final episode, we explore the deep and often overlooked hopes and dreams of the gladiators and those who lived in their shadow. Central to this exploration is the gladiators' pursuit of freedom—both as a tangible goal and as a symbol of hope amidst the brutality of their lives. We examine how some gladiators, through exceptional skill and sheer will, earned their freedom in the arena, and what that freedom meant in a society that viewed them as mere property. The episode also highlights the most famous and daring act of resistance in gladiatorial history—the rebellion led by Spartacus. Starting as a small group of escaped gladiators, this revolt grew into a formidable army that challenged the might of Rome itself. Spartacus's quest for freedom became a symbol of defiance and hope for many, illustrating the lengths to which these warriors would go to reclaim their lives and dignity. We'll delve into the motivations behind this uprising, its impact on Roman society, and the legacy it left behind. Beyond the rebellion, the episode delves into the lives of those around the gladiators—their families, supporters, and even the arena workers—who harbored their own dreams of a better life. Through their stories, we uncover the resilience and humanity that persisted even in the harshest of circumstances. Historians and experts will guide us through these narratives, shedding light on the emotional and psychological toll of life in and around the arena.

These arenas will be key locations in the series, showcasing the vast extent of the Roman Empire and the widespread appeal of gladiatorial games across diverse regions.

### Colosseum (Rome, Italy)

The most iconic and grand amphitheater in the Roman Empire, where gladiatorial games reached their peak.



### Amphitheater of Mérida (Mérida, Spain)

This Spanish site is a key part of the Roman legacy in the Iberian Peninsula, where many gladiatorial games were held.



### Amphitheater of Pula (Pula, Croatia)

A large and well-preserved Roman amphitheater in Croatia, known for hosting gladiatorial fights as part of public spectacles.



### Amphitheater of Trier (Trier, Germany)

This northern amphitheater was part of the Roman city of Augusta Treverorum, now Trier, and hosted regular games in the province of Gallia Belgica.



### Amphitheater of El Djem (El Djem, Tunisia)

A massive and stunning structure in North Africa, this arena was a testament to Roman influence beyond Italy and hosted many gladiatorial spectacles.



### Amphitheater of Pompeii (Pompeii, Italy)

One of the oldest surviving Roman amphitheaters, Pompeii's arena was an important site for gladiatorial combat before being buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.



### Amphitheater of Arles (Arles, France)

Another incredibly preserved arena in southern France, Arles was an important venue for gladiator games in Roman Gaul.



### Amphitheater of Nîmes (Nîmes, France)

A remarkably well-preserved amphitheater, still used for modern performances, where gladiators once fought for their lives.



## INCREDIBLE CGI RECONSTRUCTIONS

We will have access to exclusive, detailed reconstructions of ancient arenas, with a particular focus on a flawless and complete 3D reconstruction of the Colosseum. This state-of-the-art digital recreation will allow us to experience the Colosseum as it once stood in its full glory. The precision of the 3D reconstruction will give us the opportunity to explore areas of the arena where no one has ever ventured before, from the underground chambers that housed the gladiators and wild animals to the highest tiers of seating. These immersive reconstructions will offer viewers a rare, behind-the-scenes glimpse into the architectural wonders and complex mechanics that made the Colosseum the epicenter of Roman entertainment.

## WORLD CLASS REENACTMENTS

We will collaborate with a highly skilled team of stunt performers and reenactors who specialize in a theatrical method that creates the illusion of real physical combat. "The Tavrvs Familia Gladiatoria" is the only group in Europe that uses exact replicas of gladiatorial equipment discovered in Pompeii. Our goal is to offer spectators a perfectly crafted illusion of actual fighting, to recreate an authentic atmosphere of danger, and to provide a truly unique and immersive experience.





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**PICASSO**film