

Write your own Historical Fiction 2025

Spartacus by Nina Litwa

Life is too short to hold on to all the negative things that come your way. Always fight for freedom and never let anyone drag you into misery.

I write this with the hope that it might change the mean and cruel things happening today, and for generations to come.

I remember one such day in my own life.

I was celebrating my 17th birthday in a dusty corner of Alexandria, a bustling municipium in the vast Roman Empire. The busy streets echoed with the clatter of sandals on stone, and the scent of bread and smoke drifted through the air.

I was grateful to still be standing strong and alive because most of my friends hadn't made it this far. One of those friends was Marcus, a young boy who dreamed of one day becoming a gladiator like his father.

I vividly remember lying on my straw-stuffed mattress, the rough linen scratching my arms as I stared at the cracked ceiling above, trying to enjoy this day, trying to feel happy but I couldn't. All I could see were the faces of so many lost friends. So, I got up and stepped outside, hoping to feel a breeze against my skin, a cold reminder that I was still here. I had to try and shake off these sad thoughts for this day was for me and tomorrow would for the others.

Marcus wasn't there. No one was. There was no one left to protect me when they came to pull me away.

Suddenly, my feet felt as though they were levitating off the ground. It was as if nature itself had claimed me. I closed my eyes and let go.

'Where am I?' I remembered mumbling, my voice hoarse and shaky.

'In the Colosseum dungeon, young boy,' an old, thin man beside me explained. 'These cages lead to tunnels that open into the arena. You're a gladiator now.' I stared at him, my heart pounding.

I was wearing a leather Manica on my right arm and Greaves to protect my shins. In one hand, I gripped a sword; in the other, a heavy scuta shield. In the distance, I heard the crowd chanting and cheering — a deafening roar, hungry for blood.

Was I next? And if so, would I survive?

Why have I been chosen for this? I thought, panic rising in my chest. I don't want to be a gladiator. I just want to go home back to my normal life. The crowd's cheers grew louder, swelling like a storm. It was overwhelming. But deep down, I knew this was my time to fight. To fight for my life.

As I stepped into the arena, a thousand thoughts swirled around me. I win or I die. I win or I die. There was no turning back now.

Ahead of me stood a terrifying man — ruthless, without mercy. Augustus signalled to start. The cry of Fight! echoed across the arena, shadowing Augustus and swelling with the roar of the crowd.

I stood paralysed as the man charged, sword raised, eyes locked on mine.

The battle had begun.

My sword felt impossibly heavy, as if it might slip from my trembling hand. But then, a memory cut through the fear — Marcus's voice, steady and calm: Be the ruler of yourself. Harm won't come your way.

I gripped the hilt tighter. My heart pounded, but I steadied my breath. The words became my anchor as the enemy closed in.

I stood in the centre of the arena, and in that moment, I felt Marcus's brave spirit and almighty strength surge through me, as if it had entered my very soul.

Suddenly, I felt the man's hands close around my neck with immense force. The world blurred. Spots danced before my eyes. But Marcus's words still echoed, unwavering. So, with a final surge of will, my grip tightened on the sword. Summoning every ounce of strength I had left, I swung my arm high. The blade flew from my grasp, spinning uncontrollably through the air and then, with a fateful strike, it landed upon the man's neck.

He collapsed. The grip on my throat released. I had survived. I was victorious.

'Soldiers, take Spartacus to the dungeon!' boomed Augustus.

Rough hands seized my arms. The soldiers dragged me through the dirt and dust, back toward the cold, dark cell. I knew I was lucky. I was grateful. But a chilling thought gripped me that next time, I might not have the strength to win.

We reached the mouth of the winding tunnel, and my heart sank. The old man who had once kept

me company was gone. Whether he had escaped or passed on, I did not know. But one thing was certain, I would not let that stop me from fighting for freedom.

Hours slipped by. I waited. Each hour was marked by the sound of someone screaming in agony then cheering from the bloodthirsty crowd. I knew then I had to leave or else I would meet the same fate.

Panic surged through me. I began searching every inch of the cell, pacing frantically. My hands traced the rough stone walls. That was when I noticed it something small, hidden in a crack between the stones. I bent closer, heart pounding. My trembling hand reached out and I carefully pulled out a folded scrap of paper from the tight crevasse. The note was barely legible, but the words were clear enough to spark hope:

The key to the outside world is hope, but for the cell — on the rope.

My gaze shifted from the note to the rope above. There it was a tiny, rusted key, balanced on there. Heart pounding, I scaled the wall, gripping onto every crack and ledge I could find. Inch by inch, I climbed higher until I reached it. With a swift, careful motion, I snatched the key from its perch. I nervously climbed back down, breathless but determined. The key slid into the lock. With a soft click, the door creaked open. I stepped out into the tunnel. Shadows clung to the stone walls as I moved silently, slipping past every cell. Then, a sliver of sunlight.

I ran. Days blurred into nights. I pushed forward, driven by one need...escape.

I'm still in hiding. Still unseen. Still free.

And my place? Carved by hope — the same hope I leave behind for those still searching.