

**Alexandra of Athens**  
in  
**Gladiatrix Gossip**

*a 10-minute sparring match for two women, both of them gladiators*

by Jeff Goode  
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*(A Roman gymnasium. ALEXANDRA, a gladiatrix, suits up for a workout. Enter THORA, another gladiatrix, with gym bag and weapons.)*

ALEXANDRA  
You're early.

THORA  
I wanna make this quick. I've got a hair appointment.

ALEXANDRA  
So you're cutting practice short? Thora!

THORA  
I'm sorry, it's the only time they had available.

*(Thora ties her hair back and gets ready for a workout.)*

ALEXANDRA  
I don't know why you bother. You're just gonna get it ripped out in the arena.

THORA  
Only if I go up against you, Alexandra. Most of the girls have the decency not to mess with the tresses.

ALEXANDRA  
Hey, I'm in it to win it. It's a man's game, and you gotta play it like you got a pair.

THORA  
Pair of what?

ALEXANDRA  
I dunno. That's what the eunuchs always say.

THORA  
What's a eunuch know about gladiating?

ALEXANDRA

Actually, I'm surprised there aren't more of them in the business. I mean, whatta they got to lose? Oh, wait. I just figured it out.

THORA

I'm just saying it's common courtesy not to go straight for the coif.

ALEXANDRA

Just doing my job. You got a problem with that?

THORA

Not at all. Why do you think I'm on your team?

ALEXANDRA

You like to win?

THORA

And I like to look good doing it. First day in the arena, I told 'em pair me with the yanker, I wanna get outta here with a full head o' hair.

ALEXANDRA

The yanker?

THORA

That's what Promethea calls you. You never heard that?

ALEXANDRA

Which one's Promethea?

THORA

You know. Tall, dark and Spartan.

ALEXANDRA

All right, next time I see her, she's goin' home without that weave.

THORA

You can't tell her I said anything.

ALEXANDRA

My lips are sealed. I'm gonna let me yankers do the talking.

THORA

So what are we working on? Battleswords?

ALEXANDRA

Let's do some war spears. I wanna get good at it.

THORA

War spears? Why waste your time? You're not gonna need it at work.

ALEXANDRA

I wanna be ready for anything.

THORA

Well, anything is never gonna include two chicks dukin' it out with war spears. Trust me.

ALEXANDRA

Why not?

THORA

Because they're too phallic. Spears are for men.

ALEXANDRA

That is so sexist.

THORA

Exactly. Has the big guy ever called you up for a spear battle? Ever?

ALEXANDRA

Not yet.

THORA

Well, I wouldn't hold my water. The whole sport is chauvinist. Men fight with war spears, war blades, war hammers. And what do we get? Battle axe. Ball and chain. Mudpit and topless.

ALEXANDRA

The men fight topless, too.

THORA

Yeah, but they don't put it on the marquee.

ALEXANDRA

I never thought of it that way.

THORA

The guys get thrusting weapons and sea battles and we get lame sex puns and pillaging re-enactments. It's total misogynist exploitation. One time they made me fight a Trojan on a stallion with a fifteen-foot polearm. Ribbed. Like I'm not supposed to know what that symbolizes. And I was armed with nothing but a leather one-piece and my good looks.

ALEXANDRA

I saw that one. You kicked his gluteus.

THORA

In that outfit, he didn't stand a chance. Hardest part of that fight was deciding whether to seduce the Trojan first or the stallion.

ALEXANDRA

Never underestimate the power of a studded leather breastplate.

THORA

Are you ready? Let's do this.

BOTH

Hail Caesar!

*(They spar with spears. They chat while they fight.)*

THORA

So you got plans for this weekend?

ALEXANDRA

Guy I know gave me tickets to the amphitheatre tonight. The new Clytemnestra. Supposed to be a real tear jerker. I think they jerk some intestines, too.

THORA

I love a good queen drama.

ALEXANDRA

Some of the girls are going. I got an extra ticket if you want to come along.

THORA

I can't. I gotta get my hair done. And there's an orgy I'm thinking about swinging by.

ALEXANDRA

Anybody I know gonna be there?

THORA

Well... You remember the stallion?

*(Thora plunks Alexandra in the head. Alexandra stops the fight.)*

ALEXANDRA

Whoa!

THORA

Sorry. And I guess your ex is going to be there.

ALEXANDRA

My ex?

THORA

Yeah, the guy you carved an X in his forehead when he dumped you.

ALEXANDRA

Oh, “X”. I thought you meant my ex-boyfriend.

THORA

He’s not?

ALEXANDRA

That guy? No, that was completely platonic.

THORA

You mean he’s gay?

ALEXANDRA

No.

THORA

Plato’s gay, you know?

ALEXANDRA

Yeah, I know. I just mean... He might as well be gay. As far as I’m concerned. We’re like brother and sister. He’s not my type.

THORA

Okay, that’s like three different excuses. What aren’t you telling me?

ALEXANDRA

Nothing. It’s over. It was nothing. You want to do fisticuffs?

*(Alexandra prepares for a fistfight.)*

THORA

If he’s not your ex, then why did you carve one in his forehead when he dumped you?

ALEXANDRA

He didn’t dump me! I dumped him! Look, he’s an old partner, that’s all.

THORA

A partner? So he's gay?

ALEXANDRA

No! We were paired for the doubles tournaments. It was strictly business.

THORA

So you never slept with him.

ALEXANDRA

Of course I did. Are you kidding? But it was entirely work-related.

THORA

How is that work-related?

ALEXANDRA

It's team-building. Y'know, a bonding experience between warriors. Like Achilles and Patrocles.

THORA

So he's gay?

ALEXANDRA

No! Would you let go of the gay thing?

THORA

I'm sorry. I just want to be clear which team he's playing for.

ALEXANDRA

I think he's Macedonian.

*(Thora punches Alexandra.)*

ALEXANDRA

What was that for?

THORA

Oh, I thought we were starting. Hail Caesar.

*(Alexandra punches her back. They fight.)*

ALEXANDRA

What do you care if my ex is gay, anyway? Ex-partner, I mean.

THORA

I just want to make sure there's nothing going on between the two of you. In case I see him at the orgy.

ALEXANDRA

Please! It was nothing.

THORA

Must be something. You carved an X in his forehead.

ALEXANDRA

Look, toward the end, he was getting a little clingy. So I had to do something.

THORA

Why didn't you write him up?

ALEXANDRA

I'm barely literate in my first language. You think I'm gonna learn Latin just to write a "Dear John" letter?

THORA

What's Latin for "John", anyway?

ALEXANDRA

I thought a facial scar sent the right message. So that's what I did. And he hasn't bothered me since.

THORA

So it's definitely over between you?

ALEXANDRA

It's so over, it never started. It was totally nothing. Why do you keep asking about him? You don't have a thing for him, do you?

THORA

What? No...

ALEXANDRA

Oh Mi-nerva! You do! You've got a little crush on the gay guy at work.

THORA

You said he's not gay.

ALEXANDRA

Well, how do I know? Could be gay, could be not gay. None of my business. But I assume he's into gay sex, because that's the only kind we ever had.

THORA

You had gay sex with a male gladiator? How is that poss—Oh my Goddess!

ALEXANDRA

That's right. So if you're serious about this guy, you better be ready to take it like a man.

THORA

Wow. Okay, I'll have to think about that.

ALEXANDRA

I mean, in my culture, it's perfectly normal. That's how you stay a virgin till marriage. But you're orthodox Barbarian, so you probably prefer the more traditional positions.

THORA

Yes. Or stallions.

ALEXANDRA

Well, when in Rome...

*(Alexandra yanks Thora's hair.)*

THORA

Ow, my hair.

ALEXANDRA

Sorry. Force of habit.

*(Thora stops fighting and rubs her head.)*

THORA

Okay, but if I do get together with him, it doesn't bother you at all?

ALEXANDRA

Nooo. Why should it? Water under the aqueduct.

THORA

Water goes through an aqueduct.

ALEXANDRA

Whatever. I told you, we're like brother and sister.

THORA

Jupiter and Juno are brother and sister, and they have, like, nine kids.

ALEXANDRA

True, but then Jupiter sleeps with anything that moves, which is exactly the opposite of the case with this guy.

THORA

What do you mean?

ALEXANDRA

Well, he's very particular. He's into very specific things that you probably don't want to know about.

THORA

No, I do, I want to know.

ALEXANDRA

Well, and besides I don't think he's looking for a serious relationship right now.

THORA

He's not?

ALEXANDRA

That's what he told me when he dumped me—broke up with me—when I broke up with him!!

THORA

Okay. Well... Maybe it's for the best, then.

ALEXANDRA

Of course, it is.

THORA

'Cause you and I still have to work together.

ALEXANDRA

Nothing should come between partners.

THORA

It's just...

ALEXANDRA

What?

THORA

I dunno. I think he might really like me.

ALEXANDRA

Why do you say that?

THORA

Well, he's been coming by to see my matches lately.

ALEXANDRA

Because I'm in your matches, that's why. He's still obsessed with me.

THORA

That's what I thought, at first, too. But then he invited me to this orgy.

ALEXANDRA

Wait. He's the one invited you to the orgy?

THORA

Yeah. That's why I want to get my hair done. I mean... Just in case.

ALEXANDRA

Of course.

THORA

Not like anything's gonna happen.

ALEXANDRA

Not a chance.

THORA

But I better go, if I'm gonna make my appointment.

ALEXANDRA

Don't you want to do battleswords? It's sure to come up in the next match. They got us down for an Amazon simulation.

THORA

Not again! I hate getting one of my breasts tanned. Y'know what, I can't. I'm late, and I didn't bring a sword.

ALEXANDRA

You can borrow one of mine. It won't take a minute.

THORA

Are you sure?

ALEXANDRA

What's mine is yours. Isn't that the saying?

THORA

I dunno, is it?

ALEXANDRA

Sure, that's it. And "Gone with the wind". And "All's fair in love and sisterhood".

THORA

I never heard any of those.

ALEXANDRA

Well, have you heard this one? "Die, bitch!"

*(Alexandra attacks. They fight.)*

ALEXANDRA

So he asked you to the orgy, did he?

THORA

Yeah. I think it's gonna be a good one.

ALEXANDRA

Well, if you've seen one Roman orgy, you've seen them all.

THORA

True, but the emperor's supposed to be there.

ALEXANDRA

Hold on. He got you passes to the imperial debauch?!

THORA

Yeah. I guess he had tickets for the new Clytemnestra, but he gave them to a friend when this came up.

ALEXANDRA

So now I'm a "friend"?? He said that?!

THORA

I'm sure it's nothing personal. I mean, who's gonna turn down the emperor?

ALEXANDRA

I would! I would turn down the emperor if I was really as in love with someone as I kept saying I was every time she rejected me!!

THORA

Whoa, Alex, slow down.

ALEXANDRA

I'm not the one taking the fast horse to orgy street!

THORA

I thought you didn't care. You said it didn't bother you!

ALEXANDRA

Of course, I care! How long have we been partners, and you still can't tell when I'm in deep, deep denial? What is wrong with you?!

THORA

Take it easy. This is supposed to be practice. I said I was thinking about going out with him.

ALEXANDRA

Well, if this is only practice, just think how angry I'd be if you did ask him out.

THORA

I didn't ask him out. He asked me out.

ALEXANDRA

He would never do that!!

THORA

*(surrendering)* Okay, all right, I give up. You can keep him, he's yours.

ALEXANDRA

*(suddenly nonchalant)* Oh. Okay. Whatever you think is best.

THORA

Yeah. It is. I mean, we've still gotta work together, right? ...Partner?

ALEXANDRA

Sure thing. ...Partner.

THORA

Right. Well, I'll see you later.

ALEXANDRA

You sure you don't want to go another round?

THORA

No, I'm good. I gotta get to the salon. *(quickly)* Not for any reason. Just to sit home. Alone. With nice hair.

ALEXANDRA

Okay, well, goodbye. Have fun not going to the orgy.

*(Thora gathers up her things and slowly backs out of the chamber.)*

ALEXANDRA

B'bye! See you later! Oh, wait! You forgot something!

*(Alexandra runs off after Thora. Hair-raising scream. Alexandra storms back in with two fistfuls of hair.)*

ALEXANDRA

Nobody cuts my practice short.

*(Alexandra shoves the hair in her gym bag, packs up her things and exits.)*

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