Power, Strength, Fear, all things that can control a man. Make him do things that are against his norms and beliefs

A swing, I dodged and fell backwards, swinging my sword as I slipped again.....

Now I could remember it all, how they took me from my home. In front of me, her eyes
glossy and cold, looking at me. Her rose colored lips did not move but she spoke to me with her eyes. Help!. I heard it over and over again, she was pleading, no begging.. I broke free of the man holding me, as I drew my knife concealed in my belt. Turning, I stabbed him in the neck, creating a fountain of blood pouring on the floor.

I looked him in the eyes as he died, screaming in agony. They were black but they shone. I could see the death in them, silently creeping up to wipe the pain away. I turned again, charging towards the men holding Reeon. But I dropped to the ground. I had tripped, my feet betraying me. I landed hard, my eyes closing. In the dark I heard a scream that was cut short. And then a thump of a body hitting the ground. The next few days were a blur, waking up every few hours to a bright sun....

Another swing, this man would not give up, wanting to stay alive as long as he could. I blocked, our swords clanging as the crowd cheered. He yelped because my sword had cut his arm. I could hear myself roaring as my memory took over again...

The men had put us in a cage, treating us like animals. We trained for many days, the wooden swords left all the men sore and bruised. I remember at one point it was hot, very hot. So hot that one day when we were training I collapsed, falling on the sand. The trainer came towards me, yelling for me to get up. But I could not... A sharp crack in the air, making a crisp sound.

A pain in my back, something wet dripped off and landed on the sand, it was obvious what it was but it took me awhile to realize it. The man with the whip hit me again, that same sound hitting the air. I flinched, trying to pull my body off the ground. it took four more whip cracks to get me off the ground, but eventually I did. And my fellow gladiators cheered as I stood to my full height.

A pain in my head, the other gladiator had hit me with his shield. I stepped backwards and swung. This man must have never fought before, probably a slave. I felt bad attacking him but it was his life or my freedom.

He had a look of despair in his eyes. I paused before cleaving his head, it felt inhuman but I had to do it. It fell to the floor, eyes still wide open. I kneeled and cried, for I had just taken another mans life. Suddenly I was being dragged backwards, the men taking me back to my cell.

I sat in the cell for three days, waiting to be released, finally somebody came and lead me to the arena. I stood in the sand while hundreds cheered. The Emperor came down from his perch, I had never seen this man before but I had heard of him. He was tall sandy blonde, and blue eyes just like the ocean but not like a regular ocean, darker,  “Warriors!” “Townspeople!” “Citizens of Athens!” The Emperor shouted as the crowd quieted.

“This man has fought for your entertainment, and as is the custom, earned his freedom!” As he finished the crowd roared with pleasure. He then walked towards me and patted me on the back, “Good job son,” he said. “This way.” He pointed towards a small door on the side of the arena. As we walked towards it the crowd screamed and roared, they were content with the way my fight had gone.

I pictured my wife and child picking fruits in Olympus. They lead me to a corridor and down a staircase. We walked by a cell with at least ten men in it. They looked at me with sorrow, knowing that they would never be free.

I recognised one man in there but it did not make sense because he was the gladiator who had been released the day before. And then it hit me. I tried to run but they were holding me fiercely. They threw me in a cell, all alone with nothing but the scratched etchings on the wall from the prisoners before me. I looked at the drawings for hours, each one telling a different story; of a man with one arm, or of wars on Greece.

Eventually a man came and told me that my next fight would be in five days. They gave me me a different stage name and different armor, probably so that the crowd would not recognise me. As I sat in my cell, I thought, I thought deeply. About Reeon and Grod, my beautiful wife and son. And how I had betrayed them. I was weak, I could have fought harder to save them, It was my fault they were dead. And I made it my goal to meet them in Olympus.

It was the day of my fight, and I was ready. I followed the corridor to the entrance of the arena. The other gladiator came out from the other side, he was tall, bigger than me by far. It looked like he had better armor too. None of that mattered though because today I was not going to fight, today I was going to die.

The Emperor yelled start and the man charged at me, I dropped my weaponry  and stared him in the eyes as he killed me. They were red with rage, he was going to be one of the crowds favorites.

As I died I thought about Reeon and Grod soon, I said out loud, “*we will be reunited again*.” My last words on this earth as I stared at the man were  *“Thank you... “*