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# So You Want to Be a Gladiator

By Richard L. Bare

Says here taxes are goin' higher. Higher?  
I'm already in the three pig bracket.  
Joe, if you had any gumption,  
you'd ask ol' skinflint for a raise.  
What for? You wanta get me  
in the four pig bracket?  
Well, look at this robe.  
These are even last year's tassels.  
And this stonework is falling apart.  
Not to mention that thing you call a  
chariot, it's always at the blacksmith's.  
Well, she's transportation, dear.  
- Transportation?  
I took it to the market last week,  
and both wheels fell off.  
Honestly, Joe, if you don't  
start making more money, m'm,  
well, well, I'm gonna go an'  
see ol' skinflint myself.  
Alice! Ol' skinflint happens  
to be the emporer.  
And he hasn't got time to listen to  
the complaints of disgruntled wives.  
What's more, Nero told me just  
the other day, I'm on the way up.  
Oh, really, Joe? Gee, I hope so.  
- Don't you worry, dear.  
In three years I've worked my up  
to second position away from Nero.  
Pretty soon I'll be right under 'im.  
Goodbye, dear.  
Homer, the emporer seems to be  
in a somber mood today.  
He should be. His wife said,  
no more court maidens.  
What're those two doin' up there?  
He's tapering off.  
Who did that?  
I, I did, sir.  
- Come here, boy.  
Well, go ahead, kiddo, the boss  
wants to see yuh. Get up there.  
Aren't you the one who played E flat  
last week in my favorite sonata?

Yes, sir.

- And now you break a string. How amusing.

Faulty gut, sir.

- Please.

Tell me, Joseph, how would  
you like to play a solo?

A solo?

- Say before thirty or forty thousand?

A solo? Thirty or forty thousand?

Oh, your excellency!

Stop the slobbering!

Leave that for the lions.

The lions?

That's right. You appear in the Coliseum  
next Saturday. You're on the program.

I'm on the program!

Now what's the matter?

Aw, you're right, honey, we're  
gonna have to trade 'er in.

Joe. Joe, you mean you got the raise?

Well, yeah, I'm doing a solo at  
the Coliseum. I'm on the program.

Oh, Joe, I'm so proud of you. This  
ol' cat gut'll get us some place yet.

You're sure you're not lyin'?

- Lion?

Hey, bud. We're organizin' the  
gladiators into Local Forty-two,  
the Butchers, Bakers an' Undertakers.

You stick with us...

we'll get yuh track shoes, a longer spear,  
an' a company funeral at no cost to you.

All right, McDoakes, you're on. Go get  
your equipment. An' hurry up about it.

It's me, Homer.

The boys in the orchestra took up a  
collection and bought this lion suit.

Lion suit? What d'I need a lion suit for?

Joe. Joe, wait a minute. You missed  
the point. I will be in the suit.

You'll be in --You'll --(laughing)

(laughing)

You're gonna be in the suit. You-

- Exactly.

Excellent program today. For a moment I  
thought the last gladiator was goin' to win.  
Look at me. Look at me,  
Joe, I'm a real fighter.  
Ho! What's ol' Bess doin' here?  
Why, she's about to have her cubs.  
Take her downstairs to the lions' club.  
Come on, Bess. Come on, Bessie girl.  
Nero wants the best lion we can throw  
into the arena for the next act.  
Hurry up there. Easy, easy.  
Out you go, Bess.  
Down to the lions' club.  
Easy now. Easy...  
McDoakes! You're not gonna use these.  
This is your weapon. - A lyre?  
- Don't you call me a liar!  
Who's next? Oh, the musician, eh?  
There you are, my discord. Perhaps you  
shall make better music with the lion.  
And if, by any stretch  
of the imagination,  
you should conquer your opponent, then  
you shall have the beautiful slave girl,  
that waits you behind yonder curtain.  
Commence the concert.  
Very good, Homer.  
You sound like a real lion.  
Even smell like a lion.  
Action! I want to see action!  
Homer, the boss is gettin' impatient.  
We gotta put on a show.  
No offense now.  
Take it easy, Homer. It looks fake.  
Come on, Homer, make it look real.  
Not so much. You're overacting,  
Homer, you're overacting.  
Joe! Joe! I'm here. I'm not in  
the lion's suit. Joe, it's Homer.  
Homer, this is great.  
They're eatin' it up.  
Joe, look at me. It's Homer.  
Homer, now listen, make this  
look good. Make it look good.

Excellent. Marvelous.

Joe! Joe!

Homer, what did you have for lunch?

I'm up here in the stands, baby.

Im not in the lion suit.

Now look, I'm gonna put my head  
in your mouth. Come on now, open.

Now close on my neck. This'll  
be great. This'll kill 'em.

Joe, it's me, Homer!

- Hi yuh, Homer. Homer?

Nice kitty. Nice kitty.

Stay there, kitty. Don't you move.

Don't you move. Don't you move.

Stay there. What's the matter?

What're yuh cryin' for?

You recognize the cat gut?

It's your father? Ah, did Nero make  
a lyre out o' your father? Ahh.

Oh, Homer, I just heard.

- Yeah, but he's, he's winning.

Winning? That means he gets  
a slave girl, doesn't it?

Yeah, yeah. He's winning. Joe!

How exciting!

Well done.' And now true  
to my promise...

What, Rome is on fire? Well, don't  
just stand there. Get me my fiddle!

Open the curtains!

- Coming, sire.

Wow! Come with me, my sweet.

The emporer's wish is my command.

But, sire, what about your wife?

Poo-poo, she can do the cooking.

Oh, she will! I mean, the three  
of us all in the same house?

Tut, tut, my sweet. If she bothers  
you, we'll get rid of the old bag.

The old bag! So.

- Alice!

I'll do the cooking, will I? You're  
gonna get rid of me, are you?

Alice!

- Well, we'll just see about that.  
Honey... - Why, you two-timer, you!  
- Easy, dear.  
Fidelius! What a show! From now on,  
no more lions, we'll do it this way.  
No, Alice, please. No more. Oh.  
Psst, Joe. It's me, I made it.  
He made it.