



House of Simeon

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Gold was the uncontested champion in the arena, elevated to a hero by the masses, but nothing but a slave in actuality. His heart was the only thing he had that was his own.

Gold was the unbeatable champion of the House of Simeon but after the gods foretell his death, his master refuses to put him into the arena again. Instead, he makes Gold his trainer, and uses his body for his own pleasure.

Gold wants nothing more than to fight again. It is all he knows, and he hates the fact that people think he is a coward, hiding behind his master. He longs for a death of glory in the arena, the only respectable way for a gladiator slave to leave this world.

Samson comes into Gold's life unexpectedly. A slave with potential to rise through the ranks, but also the first man who has been able to rouse something inside of him he thought was dead.

Can Samson make Gold reveal his feelings, or will he remain the unattainable trainer who longs for a glorious death?

Reader Advisory: This book contains BDSM and ménage à trois scenes.

House of Simeon Details

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From Reader Review House of Simeon for online ebook

The FountainPenDiva, Old school geek chick and lover of teddy bears says

Yes I bought the entire series and yes I'll be reading them all since they're relatively short; but seriously, this was sex with some gladiatorial action thrown in just for fun.

In the pantheon of favorite gay male characters, gladiators are at the top of the list. They're the ultimate manly-men with all those rippling muscles oiled down wearing those scanty little loincloths and wielding sharp swords and other long, pointy objects. No pesky angst and emotions here, just fight and fuck and die (maybe).

Granted I just finished an awesome historical M/M series and as predicted, I'm judging every subsequent historically-based book by it. House of Simeon seems less about the history and more about how much sex can one pack into a two-hundred page story. Every character in this series is just so uninteresting, more like caricatures than flesh and blood characters. Not that I'm adverse to good guy-on-guy smut, but the scenes here were just so bland--insert Tab A into Slots B,C,D and perhaps E and F. Most of the sex came off as more non-con (and not the good kind), but sex between non-equals that one party simply endures. There was really no chemistry between Gold, the uber-champion and Samson (seriously???) the brash challenger who is supposedly in love with Gold. Of course Gold is the dark loner and undefeated champion whom everyone wants to bang and most actually get to. With as much sex going on in Rome, it's a wonder they actually had time to conquer the known world.

I'm much better off re-watching the DVD set of Spartacus, Blood and Sand, which this series totally reminds me of, and not in a good way.

Lauraadriana says

I'd say 3.5

This was an interesting historical it had plenty of elements that seemed right, so accurate, the language though was so contemporary it threw me off a bit...I kept waiting for Gold to say 'A gladiator gotta do what a gladiator gotta do'...But then again maybe that's just me.

All in all it was a good story Gold was a spartan slave in Rome, belonged to the House of Simeon he was their legendary undefeated Gladiator...he has a place of importance in that house but they never let him forget he was a slave. Samson another slave comes along and he begins to remember who he was...I liked the story and will read the next ones...I think the writer is def on to something and these will improve.

Dee Wy says

I really enjoyed this Gladiator story. Gladiators may attain some measure of glory, but in reality they are simply slaves, used as it pleases their masters including as sex toys for their pleasure or sent to the ring to die simply to honor some noble. It's a harsh world they live in but Gold's character showed that even in this environment you can have principles and find love. Nicely written and a very engaging read.

Erastes says

The trouble I found with this, that it was like reading an episode of the TV show Spartacus. Now, I don't know when this was written, although it was published in 2010. It may have been written a long time before Spartacus hit our screens, but it's unfortunate in that case for the author because so much of Spartacus is mirrored here. Gold is in the place of Oenameaus, the Doctore (trainer) in the show. He's an ex-gladiator and his master doesn't want him to fight any more and Gold resents that, just like the Doctore does. There's a champion, and a possible up and coming champion. There's a resentful son. In fact there's much that's derivative but in a way, that's also to be expected. I don't suppose ludi (the gladiator schools) were that different from each other.

The story, whilst familiar, isn't bad. It's certainly readable and if you like gladiator stories you'll like this. It just didn't sing for me.

Regarding the characters, Gold is one of these characters who EVERYONE in the world wants to shag. Obviously his fans from the arena, but his owner wants to shag him too, his owner's wife ditto, the son, every single gladiator, the house servants, even rival gladiator owners. It gave the impression that he was of more use as a sex slave than a gladiator. And frankly, I couldn't see what everyone saw in him. We are told he's gorgeous, but other than his black hair and hugely muscled abs (yes, they get called abs, too) I couldn't see the attraction. Yes, he'd get people who wanted to fuck him because he was a star (albeit waning) but he was a veritable iceberg and at least two of the other testosterone laden-cut-your-head-off-soon-as-look-at-you were sighing over their oatmeal in love with him. And as so often is the case, everyone (aside from the women) have homosexual tendencies, or are entirely homosexual.

Which leads me to the girly glads. The ones who show feelings seem altogether rather romantic for the setting they are in. I'm not saying relationships weren't formed even in such horrible circumstances, but one particular gladiator spends more time swooning and hardening over his amore than he does actually worrying that he could be dead in a day or so. The love story wasn't convincing, either. One moment Gold is all "I have no heart" and then he's "I love him" and there really wasn't enough interaction between the two to give this any kind of reality. Granted they had a couple of quick tumbles, but the communication between them both didn't seem likely to have such passionate attachment. Your mileage may vary, I know.

There's plenty of hot sweaty gladiator sex here, if that's your bag, but my main problem with it is that most of it was rape. You might wave your finger at me and say "oh, surely, it's only non-consensual isn't it?" But no. Non con = rape and the fact that a slave submits to the abuse doesn't change it from being wrong to being "Ok for titillation." I didn't like the rape scenes at all, and presented as erotica, I liked them even less. I suspect, having read the first section of Book 2, this is also going to be a big problem for me. Present the full-blown rape penetrative scenes as veiled flashbacks and concentrate on the consensual stuff, specially in a romance. Save the other for mainstream fiction.

Rating “e-taboo”—I didn’t like this, because there’s nothing here that’s taboo. No-one’s shagging goats, or their sisters. Yes, there’s rape but others would call it non-con and say slave sex was not rape. But rating it taboo simply perpetrates the idea that gay sex is naughty and wrong. Need I go on?

Language – not bad. There’s no attempt, thank goodness to go and write it in translated Latin, like the Spartacus show, and the modern speech didn’t bother me all that much. But one or two instances did — e.g “I don’t know what makes him tick.” Really? What ticked in Roman times? I could gloss over a lot of the modern language, after all if we translated everyday speech from Roman times it would of course be colloquial, but if i’d been editing this, I would have suggested phrases that suited the time.

Talking of editing, it was pretty shoddy. Typing errors all over the place, e.g. trial for trail, Gracie at least 3 times for Gracia which made me chuckle—and homonyms such as discretely and discreetly being muddled. The POV needed a lot of tightening up, too as several chapters began in third person and then slipped into first which was disorienting and annoying.

But despite my catalogue of quibbles, it was very readable, and I read to the end, gripped by the story and worrying about the characters enough to enjoy the read in general. I’m looking forward to reading the next one despite the problems I know I’m going to have with it.

Martin says

What is it about Gladiators that I keep coming back to them, LOL?

This is part 1 of a 3 (4?) installment series, so there is no closure and the MCs do not get any kind of HEA or HFN.

Gold is a gladiator who won many glorious battles for his master, Simeon. He actually became so valuable to Simeon, that he stopped sending him into the arena and employs him as a trainer for the other gladiators in his ludus instead.

Gold also shares Simeon's bed (and to be honest, the bed of more or less everyone in the family...), but Gold is a slave, so he has no choice but to comply. Only one thing is his and his alone that not even his master can take away: His heart. And he guards it closely not letting anyone near it, especially not the other gladiators he works off tension with in the baths.

(Reading my own review here, it seems this book is pure porn. Well...)

One day, a new trainee arrives: Samson. He was recently captured and is defiant, but Gold soon turns him into the ludus' best fighter and starts to not only open his body to the younger man, but also his heart (God, I'm cheesy today, LOL).

Anyway, there is no happy ending in this book and nothing gets resolved, really, so I cannot really say much else about the plot.

The story is quite hot, the MCs are interesting and captured my attention enough to read on. The sex is a bit flat, but still fine. I was surprised that macho Samson turned into a needy bottom for Gold rather quickly, but I guess that's what happens when you live in close quarters with a hunk like him. Right?!

All in all, 4 stars!

Karen K says

I don't think I've ever read a m/m book with gladiators and I must say that is a real shame since they are a sexy group of guys. :)

This was a fabulous read! I loved the world that the author built, the details and rules of the society that were presented. The dialogue and descriptions made it more like watching a movie than reading a book for me, everything vivid and clear. I could hear the voices, picture the body language and feel whatever aura they were giving off at the time. I have to say I loved the switching of POVs as well, really made me feel what Gold and Samson were thinking.

The characters were realistic for the times they were living; raw, strong, obsessively powerful in ways, but completely powerless in others. They lived the life they were given as best they could, but couldn't help bucking the system just a little bit to show they still had independent minds and hearts.

Gold was fascinating and I completely fell for him. His inner turmoil and wilted pride shone through and it made me ache a little bit when he showed his longing and yearning to be back in the ring rather than riding his master's coattails. I rooted for him to be put back into the fight but at the same time, worried for his safety especially since he made it clear he did not want to win his last battle. The romance between him and Samson was beautiful, even in the few simple moments they had together. Samson's clear indications that he wanted Gold for more than just a quick toss was both refreshing and heartwarming and I loved it when Gold allowed himself to feel something other than lust.

Great story, great characters and the great start of a series I can't wait to keep reading.

April says

This was truly an awful read. First off, it's clearly the first part of a larger series, so there's no resolution for any of the characters at the end of it. Next, while the author has clearly done some research into Ancient Rome, there are so many historical inaccuracies that it makes it hard to take the research seriously. For example, at one point she makes reference to a Carthaginian, but both of the main characters are also supposed to be Spartan and from the sounds of it, this is supposed to take place after the conquest of Greece. The two time frame are mutually exclusive as the earth around Carthage was commanded to be salted and the city was leveled well before this. Also, while the author references some of the most basic ideas of Greece and Rome, i.e., Spartan military training or the idea that some gladiatorial conquests were to the death, but completely ignores the accompanying facts, like the fact that this training was obligatory for all boys and it was brutal or the fact that most gladiatorial shows were not to the death since that makes no financial sense. Overall, I was left with the sense of the author trying to show off a knowledge of ancient Greece and Rome that was superficial at best, and often empirically speaking wrong from what we know. (This doesn't even take into account how the culture was addressed.)

I can't say there was one thing I actually enjoyed about this book. I admit I have higher standards when it comes to historical accuracy than most no doubt do, but barring that, there still wasn't much to enjoy. None

of the characters were overly likable, there was no real resolution (probably because I get the sense it's a series), and the writing was at best serviceable. The only real thing that was memorable about this book for me was just how wrong it was from an historical standpoint.

Lisa says

I've read this series out of order but it doesn't matter.

This is the story of Gold and he is the trainer in the House of Simeon.

It's a story of gladiators and slaves and the life in the arena.

Some of the arena action was too bloodthirsty for me but this is a good series and I will continue to read it.

Serena Yates says

This is an amazing book and a very promising start to the Gladiators series. Historicals very rarely pull me in as much as this one did, and it is a testament to the quality of the story that it held me captivated from the first to the last page. The descriptions of the environment, the way people lived at the time, and the society and politics were not only historically accurate (from what I remember learning in school and reading about since then), they were detailed enough to make it feel almost like a contemporary book. People are people, after all, so the politics and backstabbing are hauntingly familiar.

Gold's life as a slave and gladiator is shown in such vivid detail that I felt as if I was right there with him. He is a very 'hard' man, having survived years in the arena, having seen friends being slaughtered, and not being in charge of his own life. My heart went out to him as the depth of his helplessness became clearer throughout the story. The way he looks at life makes it very clear what it must have been like to be a slave in those times, revered as a champion gladiator on the one hand, and used by your masters on the other. He is so deeply in that mindset that the only honorable way out he sees is death in the arena. And that is the one thing his master will not grant him.

Samson, on the other hand, has only recently been made a slave. He was taken prisoner by the Roman army and sold to become a gladiator. There is a lot of fight left in him, and a belief that he can somehow survive the next five years, after which he has been promised freedom. He finds it difficult to see how Gold can be so closed off from feeling anything, but cannot stop from falling in love with him. I have a feeling that it will be the source of a lot of heartache for him in the future.

This is only the first of three books, so the story is by no means finished. I cannot even imagine the trials and tribulations Gold and Samson are going to face, but am definitely curious to learn more about them. Thoroughly recommended for people who like historical novels, and everyone who has an interest in understanding how human nature works under adverse conditions.

NOTE: This book has been provided by Total-E-Bound for the purpose of a review.

MsMiz (Tina) says

Holy hell.....

Don Bradshaw says

A very good story about the lives of gladiators in the Roman era. This is book one in a three book series. Gold was the champion of the house of Simeon. Though the grand champ, he was still owned and was little more than a piece of meat to be used in the arena or the bed. Gold thought himself to be incapable of love until the gladiator, Samson, wins his heart but even that happiness is taken away from the lowly slaves. This book gave a real look at the life of a gladiator/slave. The writing was top notch and the characters made to feel so real. Though brutal and some of the sex forced, I thoroughly enjoyed this story.

JustJen "Miss Conduct" says

Hot gladiators and slaves? Check! Ok, so this pretty much held my interest throughout. Some of the scenes are a little gorey, but not terribly cringe-worthy. I had no trouble feeling the desperation or hopelessness of the plights of these guys. Gold was making the best of his situation and tried his best to convey the way things were to the new slaves/gladiators. Can't imagine the feeling of knowing you are sending a bunch of people to slaughter, let alone having to do the slaughtering yourself. But this was the way things were. They were property to be used as the masters saw fit, whether it was for sex (although I was a bit surprised the slaves were more often used as tops) or for sport/entertainment.

Anyhoo, there are some good characters here, and some not-so-good characters. It moved along at a good clip, and I was eager to read the next segment.

Isabeau Delaunay says

Kind of silly, but hey, I was in the mood for gladiators and this was the first thing I found. There's some "forced but seems consensual" borderline stuff here (men taking advantage of slaves but they enjoy it - mostly). But the real problem is how everyone seems to fall in love with the main character, named Gold. For rough & tough gladiators they sure all have so many feeeeeeeelings.

Shelby says

Honestly I may be a little bit biased on this one having just recently finished "*The Gladiator's Master*" by Fae Sutherland and Marguerite Labbe, but "*House of Simeon*" doesn't even come close to living up to its potential. There is no soul in this book. While technically it isn't badly written, it's just not a good book.

Gold is the undisputed champion of his master's house. He's won every gladiator battle he's ever fought in.

But his master will no longer let him fight, fearing to lose his skills, and instead has him training the new gladiators. Having cut himself off from all emotion Gold trudges through life serving at his masters pleasure, whatever that pleasure may entail. He faces resentment from the other gladiators and must tip toe his way through the potential pit falls of pissing off his master.

Samson has recently been captured and fights against his slave bonds, but one look at Gold and he finds himself drawn to the older fighter. His passion and anger save his life in his first fight in the arena. Instead of dying luck leads him to gaining the crowds support and a second lease on life. Now as Gold trains him to his new life as a gladiator Samson finds it harder and harder to watch the other man walk away. But, a gladiator's life is not his own.

I love this time period. By all rights I should have loved this book, but there's really nothing there to like. There's no great story, no great characters, not even great sex to redeem it. It's not even that the book is bad so there's something to rail against, it's just blah. It's almost clinical at times with its descriptions of Roman life. Things like, here is this Roman word you won't recognize so I'm going to follow it immediately with a definition. And then I'm going to proceed to never use the word again. I didn't feel immersed in the culture. Instead I felt like it was an after thought the author occasionally threw in to "add color."

Gold is so cold and so adamantly refuses to let any emotion in I can't even begin to connect with him. I understand he's been through hell, but if there's no hope for him than why am I reading? Samson and he don't have enough interactions for him to truly start breaking down Gold's shell. Also, Samson's immediate obsession for no reason with Gold makes little sense.

I also personally don't like the prolific use of the gladiators by everyone else in the house for sex. If I'm reading a romance novel I'd like there to be some romance. I don't mind if Gold's being forced to service one person, but the bed hopping was becoming ridiculous. It's not just Gold either. The hottest sex scene, one would think, would be between our two main characters. Instead it's between Phillip, Samson, and Claudius and is essentially a rape since neither Phillip nor Samson are allowed to say no, even if they do get off. The only truly consensual sex in the entire book is barely even acknowledged. Altogether there was nothing that made me feel like these two characters were actually drawn to each other. I didn't feel that there was anything emotional behind their actions, or that there was any potential for them to fall in love.

Also for anyone who likes HEA or HFN endings this book isn't for you. There is absolutely no resolution to anything the characters are going through. Sure they've survived the most recent gladiator battles, but instead of a resolution everything is in upheaval. You're not left with much hope for our supposed heroes. In some ways this book reads as more of a prequel to the main romance that is supposed to come later. In fact I'd be more likely to look on it favorably if that was the case. Instead, as a first book in a series, one that's supposed to entice me into wanting to read more, it fails. I just didn't care enough about any particular thing in the book to bring me back for more.

In the end I might give this book an extra ½ star simply for the fact that it's written about one of my favorite historical periods and because it doesn't do anything truly offensive. Ultimately though, it's just boring.

Trisha Harrington says

This was a good book, I really liked Gold. He had a dark, cold personality but there was a softness about

him. To be used for sexual gratification and never have felt pleasure was hard for him. But he is like ice most of the time, his heart never being won, by anyone. Samson was a good character too, I enjoyed his spirit. :)
