

Herald 201

Chapter 201 Seelima's Past

The twins were first amazed and then appalled by Alexander's gall.

First, using tricks and threats he stole from them.

Then he made them recount the entire thing in front of an entire crowd as they got booed.

And then at last, he got them ex-communicated which for them felt worse than getting stabbed in the heart.

So, for Alexander to suggest such a thing made them incensed as Azira spat out, "And why are we in this place in the first place, you scoundrel?"

"That's right, that's right. It's because of you bad man! You...cheat," Azura nodded to her sister's words, equally furious that the culprit behind everything was teasing them about this.

Alexander was not all offended by this display of hostility.

On the contrary, compared to the passive-aggressive display by the others, he quite liked this frank display very much.

He even found their anger a bit cute as among all the facades and fake smiles, it was always refreshing to see such honest feelings.

But someone who didn't find it funny was the Queen-mother Seelima.

"Azira, Azura, manners!" The Queen mother sharply glared at the twins, as she felt a migraine coming from having to manage the three adult children and one actual child at the table who seemed to have forgotten all noble etiquette.

'Never be rude to even your most hated enemy,' was the motto of all Adhanian nobility, meaning there was no room for ill manners and discourteousness in the noble circle.

A motto that all four of her company had failed to live up to today.

'Thankfully Alexander is mild-tempered and easygoing. I certainly would not have stood for such coarseness,' The Queen-mother thanked the stars that the pleasant meal atmosphere had not yet been destroyed.

And then swore, 'After dinner, I will have to teach these scoundrels how to talk and act in front of a noble, in front of a pasha,' The Queen mother's eyes subconsciously narrowing looking at the four miscreants.

But according to Alexander, the Queen mother was overreacting, as he let out another large grin and chuckled, "Your Highnesses are right. I did get you excommunicated. And for that, I apologize."

After that Alexander slightly bowed his head causing the twins to be at a bit of a loss for words.

They had thought Alexander would snap at them for being rude or mock them for being weak and gullible.

And so was surprised and also a bit pleased at his apology.

This didn't change anything but at least it was a kind of spiritual comfort.

But this presented a new problem for them, as now, they didn't know how to advance the conversion.

And neither did anyone else at the table who all looked at Alexander with different thoughts.

Up until now Alexander had laughed and brushed off all the insults thrown at him, bending his head and spine every time.

Some like Mikaya and Hellma sneered and disdained at Alexander, 'A mere slave dares call himself equal to us. Craven worm,' They thought.

Azira and Azura didn't know what to think as they found Alexander too mercurial to fit into any archetype.

People that knew him well like Gelene, Cambyses, and Mean had thoughts like, 'Alex is really a slimeball. He can spew as much nonsense as he likes without batting an eye.'

While Ophenia with her zealous devotion to Alexander saw Alexander as a victim of the old bullying the new and young.

'One day master will take ten times the revenge on all of you,' Her eyes burned with a scary flame.

And at last, there was the Queen-mother, who had a very different reaction to all others.

Her reaction was a little unusual feeling, as it was one of fear.

Yes, fear.

Because she saw in Alexander what she had in her- the ability to take humiliation without batting an eye.

The Queen-mother Seelima did not become Queen-mother Seelima out of nowhere.

No, the amount of work she had to put in was almost mind-boggling.

After all, just surviving twenty-one years under a mad king would have been a herculean task, not to even mention surviving under a mad king as his favorite slave, a status that could evaporate in less than the blink of an eye.

But Queen-mother Seelima had done exactly that, remaining under the king's constant gaze from the age of twelve and yet not losing his favor for a single time.

She had in reality done more than that as she remained the king's favorite toy even after she had given birth to a girl, a sub-species to many.

And she did not do this through pride and hubris.

No, she did it through perseverance and flexibility, seeing the challenges that came along her way not as an obstacle to defeat and overcome, but as a test for her to change and adapt.

And Alexander was exactly doing that here, avoiding direct conflict with his much stronger opponent, letting himself be humiliated and losing the battle, just so that he would still have the chance to win the war.

'Fearful,' Queen-mother Seelima saw her in Alexander, just a more refined version, while her thoughts drifted to her own ordeal.

Serving the mad king was no easy feat.

And she had let herself be humiliated, bullied, and stepped on, just so that she could live to fight another day, to make others belittle her, to make others underestimate her, to make others lower their guard against her.

And to do that she regularly put herself in the most humiliating position possible.

Not that it was very hard doing so as the mad king regularly loved to put his favorite toy up for show and since the age of fourteen, Seelima was made to perform for the highest echelons of Adhania.

And to help her accomplish that she didn't have just a single bliss trainer, but multiple, who all pushed her to her absolute limits, making her perform depraved acts few would dare imagine existed.

She believed she had done everything one could do related to sex on this god's earth, and some that even god might not know.

She had been bound, gagged, and hung while the sadistic men and sometimes even women enjoyed her exotic body.

Her pink nipple had been licked, pinched, sucked, pulled, bitten, twisted, clamped, and pierced.

Her clit had suffered the same too.

Her ass had been spanked till she couldn't sit for the next week, pierced by multiple cocks, and stretched to the point she wondered if people would be able to see what she ate that day.

Her pussy had been pounded to oblivion by what she assumed was a horse dick that god had mistakenly attached to a human and the amount of cum her hole had taken in could fill a pond.

She had been many times made to perform with her other sisters and those would be a bit more bearable as they could bear some of the brunt and thrusts.

But the king usually enjoyed her solo performances and those would always take a toll on her body, especially if there were multiple men to please, which there usually were.

The men would roughly grope and molest her, tugging and pulling at her sensitive parts with wild abandon, sticking their phallus inside all her holes whenever they felt and treating her pained moans and gags as entertaining music.

Usually, by the end of those things, she would be barely able to stand.

And this would take a turn for the worse if the king's wife, the queen, was there to take part in the festivities.

She hated Seelima with a passion and made sure to make life as difficult as possible for the young slave girl.

Not to even mention how she would egg the other girls in the harem to bully Seelima, the queen would make her kiss her puckered hole in the morning as a greeting, making Seelima give her a rim job every morning.

She also loved to spank Seelima using a solid wooden paddle that she carried, wanting to keep the girl's butt nice and red and she would always try to urge the king to show off his new toy to his guests, in hopes that the girl would catch one their eyes and the king would gift this eye sore to them.

And whenever Seelima would perform shows such as the water show, she would lead her cronies of noble ladies to specifically target Seelima, using their crops to always hit Seelima where it hurt her, but never broke her,

And whenever Seelima would lose control of her bladder, there would always be a lady with a chamber pot under her, making her rehydrate herself with her own fluids.

Sometimes even the guests would fill her three holes with this stuff, or just shower her in general, including the king and queen, for which Seelima earned the nickname, 'King's flesh toilet.'

But the Queen mother survived through all this, burying her ambition deep inside as she toiled away, slowly removing the earth under her detested foes.

Until the day, she managed to kill the two people she hated the most, the king and the queen.

Chapter 202 Dinner With The Royals (Part -3)

The queen-mother Seelima's first big breakthrough came when she managed to make the king send one of the queen's cronies in the harem to a sadistic noble using some false allegations and honeyed words.

And after her first triumph, soon more success followed.

Later, another one of her bullies would mysteriously fall off a window.

Another would somehow earn the king's ire and be torn by the dogs limb to limb.

In this way, she would use the fact that she had the king's ears and even his eyes to exchange favors with the nobles, helping her eliminate her targets while she whispered little suggestions, telling an event a certain way, and even knowing about various secret treaties.

Hence, slowly and carefully she made the king's harem her own kingdom, kicking out the queen and relegating her to a sideshow.

And after that came her revenge arc, where she made every single woman that harmed her taste their own medicine, the best example being the queen herself.

Just thinking about that, her masterpiece would make Seelima's lips curl up in joy any time of the day.

She did this by first orchestrating the deaths of Amenheraft's two brothers, framing them for blasphemy through Pasha Farzah's help and seeing the two brats who made her suffer so much burn at the stake, their own mournful howls made only the sweeter by their mother's.

She would never forget the amount of happiness she felt the day the haughty queen came to her begging for her sons' lives, and how Seelima had made the queen kiss her feet, suck her buttohole, lick her pussy, drink her piss like the cruel woman would make her do.

And then, once done, Seelima landed a brutal kick on the kneeling, once majestic woman's nose, her high heel digging into the beautiful face and destroying it.

"How dare you ask me of anything after everything you made me go through?" Seelima, that day, for the first time in her life had screamed out her true feelings.

Leaving the bloody queen clutching at her broken nose, Seelima had haughty walked away, and a few later took part in the show she had dreamt of not for years but decades.

Seelima watched with relish as the fire peeled off the skin from the flesh of the two brothers, the fire burning a dazzling white as it came into contact with the fat under the skin, climbing up their writing

body as the crispy, crackling sound and the pungent smell of flesh being cooked soothed her bruised soul.

'They deserve it. No, this is not enough, they should suffer more!' Seelima swore in her heart.

And sometime later the queen would die from cholera, which was Seelima's idea of irony and a joke, a disease she would make the queen get by dipping her food with the loincloths of an infected man.

In this way, the 'King's flesh toilet' came to be known as 'The spider', ever patient, ever careful, and ever weaving her webs of plot and intrigue.

And seeing Alexander's malleable spine, this spider was feeling cautious and a bit alarmed, seeing a lot of herself in the young boy, her 'spider senses' honed over twenty-one years of facing constant danger telling her not to antagonize the man or if it must be done, to use everything and even some more to try and destroy him.

And among the dread and alarm, there was intrigue and curiosity, the woman wanting to know why her senses were giving her such signals against a young boy.

Alexander was not aware of the Queen-mother's state of mind, and frankly, he was not interested.

His current interest lay in convincing the twins to join the temple so that he could carry out his clandestine operation.

So after the twins stopped looking at him awkwardly and slowly went back to eating, Alexander again asked them, "Your Highnesses, you still haven't answered me. Do you wish to join the temple of Ramuh?"

"Because I can help if you do!" Alexander sent a light smile that made him look like the devil tempting them in Azira and Azura's eyes.

But what made them even more fearful was that they felt like they couldn't refuse.

The twins had been bought up in a religious, faith-centric household and suddenly barring them from practicing it felt like a part of their soul had been torn away.

The twins cleverly hid it, mostly because they didn't want to give Alexander the satisfaction of gloating in their misery, but inside they were very bruised.

So, when Alexander gave them the option to return to the temple, even if it was a trick, they were tempted to try.

"Wha..what are you talking about? Don't..don't you know...know what you did to us?" Azira stammered her rejection, while her eyes darted everywhere.

Her reluctance to say those words and the desire to actually say yes was something clear to even a child.

'Haha, these two are cute,' Alexander laughed in his heart.

And so he dangled the fruit even lower, "Your Highnesses, your ex-communication was done by His Majesty Ptolomy. But many people also follow your father Amenheraft's doctrine. And if you follow that then you will no longer be rejected by the church!"

Alexander's statement bought astonishment and shock to everyone in the room.

'Is he trying to convince Azira and Azura to betray him? Why? What's he planning?' Mikaya had finally decided to return her mind to the conversation at the table.

"That...your lordship...isn't...." The Queen mother too was confused.

'Wasn't the plan to try and diminish Amneheraft's faith and replace it with Prolomy's 'two gods' faith? Why's he proposing this?' Seelima asked herself.

After Ptolomy, spurred by Alexander announced the new faith, naturally many priests and clergy left and set up their own temples to practice their old one god Ramuh religion.

And under the terms of the new treaty, Ptolomy was helpless to stop this, even more when most of the populace showed little interest in associating their god Ramuh with a woman.

So the king and his two advisors came to the joint decision to try and suppress the old Amenheratf's religion and promote Ptolomy's.

But what Alexander was proposing ran antithesis to this as employing the famous twin saintesses would cause a flood of new converts or make believers even more staunch in their belief.

Alexander didn't miss the inquisitive look, "I can understand your confusion Queen mother. But I believe I owe the twin princess at least this much as an apology."

And then he turned to the dithering two women and informed, "Don't let that ex-communication or switching faith concern you, Your Highness. You will all be protected by the first point in the treaty which guarantees the safety of all members belonging to either party."

"N..No. We have been thrown out of the church and we will abide by it," Azira somehow managed to clench out the words through her teeth, her eyes almost tearing up as she again rejected the golden proposal.

And her sister joined her too with a nod.

But Alexander was not about to take a no for an answer.

He couldn't.

So he pushed again, "Your Highnesses, I believe you should reconsider thinking about the general populace."

Seeing this new statement draw the twin's attention, Alexander further detailed, "I believe it is the duty of any saintess to guide the people to the right path. So, I would advise you to put your personal feelings aside and do it for the people."

"That...that..." Azira faltered to give a strong rejection.

And Alexander immediately capitalized on it as he snatched the words from the girl's mouth, "Your Highness, in life, we have too many times do things we don't want to. So, I will talk to the priests in the temple tomorrow. And the two royal highness can join the temple the day after."

"That..." Azira shot a sneaky glance at her sister.

"Good...we will do it. For the people," Azura nodded slowly, though the happiness that spilled out of her mouth was unmistakable, evidenced by her curved lips and how quickly she devoured her carbonara.

"Um, I will write to His Majesty to explain the situation. I'm sure he will understand." Alexander smiled a reply, though he didn't miss the weird looks being sent his way.

He was too forceful with the twins and after tomorrow, the smart women in the room would easily connect the dots.

'Ehh, whatever. They are on my side anyway,' Alexander shrugged.

By this point, dinner was almost finished for everyone else and so Alexander decided to concentrate on his meal, and sometime later, their plates were empty.

"Pasha Alexander's cooking was truly heavenly," Queen mother Seelima again praised.

"Haha, I'm glad my humble skills could please such refined tongues," Alexander lightly bowed and received the Queen mother light smile.

"Well, it's getting late. So let us adjourn today" Alexander then announced the conclusion of the eventful and almost fiery supper.

Chapter 203 Home Security (Mass Release)

After the Queen mother and company bid their goodbyes, Alexander addressed his own people, "Mean, Cam, Gelene, please come to my study," He asked.

This sudden request made up of the unusual combination drew a bit astonished looks from all of them, but they nodded in assent nevertheless.

"Master, I have something to say as well. May I join too?" Ophenia asked

"Sure," Alexander easily consented.

Though he did wonder, 'What could she want?'

As the five people made their way to the study, Mean couldn't help but let Cambyses fill in on

how Alexander had made a fool of himself in the kitchen.

And it was every bit mortifying as he thought it would be.

"You should've been there mistress. There Alex was, grabbed and almost pinned by a mama, and then Juminus went, 'You...who are yo...yach...Alexander. I mean..commander! I mean...plop'..." Mean very animatedly used faces and body language to reenact the whole 'play' eliciting guffaws and giggles from the trio.

Even Ophenia bit her lower lips hard so as to not appear laughing at her master.

"Haha, Alex, when did you become so weak? Pinned down by a girl, hahaha," Cambyses held back no punches as she mocked Alexander, making Alexander swear in his heart, 'Just wait! I will show you who is weak.'

The five reached their destination amidst all the laughing at Alex and were led inside the study, which due to the floor heating was nice and cozy, making all five of them stretch their bodies in comfort.

The servants had already finished renovating the portico, and many noticed the statue that could have been usually seen through the window was nowhere to be found.

"Please sit everyone," Alexander gestured to the comfortable leather couch as he bought a pitcher of wine and some glasses with a few tangerines.

"Master, let me," Ophenia quickly then poured the drinks for everyone while the other trio sat like princesses.

'These girls really love making her work,' Alexander half-joked in his heart.

And then moved to the real topic,

"Now, why I brought you here," Alexander began which commanded the other's attention.

"Today's ...fiasco at the kitchen has made me realize that even I cannot access my own house without an escort. And so I intend to assign uniforms to the guards and servants. What do you say?"

Alexander looked around for their opinion.

"I too have run into this problem a couple of times. So, I think it's a good idea. No, a great idea," Cambyes nodded to display her approval.

"Yes, we can have different uniforms for different kinds of servants. There have been many times where I mistook a maid for a cook or a cook for a sweeper." Gelene gave her own input.

"Yes! That's tight. Different uniforms for servants. They can have specific colors too. Like black for maids and white for cooks" Mean excitedly added.

'Wow. you girls sure are full of ideas today, aren't you?' Alexander half-jokingly commented in his heart, internally very pleased that the three basically came to the same conclusion as him on their own.

"Haha, well you have said basically everything I wanted to say." Alexander chuckled.

Then turned to Ophenia, "Does Tayin want to add anything?"

The tall, dyed brunette only smiled and politely shook her head.

So, turning to Mean Alexander said, "Okay, then, I will give designs for the clothes to Mean. And then you can order them in the appropriate numbers."

"Okay." Mean agreed.

Alexander afterward raised another issue, "Now, there is another issue about the kitchen that caught my eye, that is it's too big."

This analysis by Alexander caused Mean to furrow her brows a little as she asked Alexander, "Alex, why are you saying the kitchen is too big? You yourself saw that we needed the whole space to do our job!"

"Oh, you misunderstand." Alexander gestured using his hands, saying, "What I meant was that the kitchen was too big for us, as in for me and the guests. As demonstrated by...me, such a big kitchen leaves holes for spies and saboteurs to exploit." Alexander warned.

And then proposed, "So, I want to build a secondary much smaller kitchen staffed by only a few people and led by Mean in the backyard."

This wasn't anything major and the others happily accepted.

"But who will then run the big kitchen?" Mean couldn't oversee both, especially when they would be in different buildings.

"You will be in charge of all the servants. For specifically administering the big kitchen, you can choose among the loyal, competent servants under you," Alexander gave Mean the power while also stressing the point of loyalty.

Then he heavily emphasized another point, "Remember, you must personally oversee the food that is made for us and the guests. And I mean personally, as in seeing the food being prepared and cooked with your very own eyes."

Such repeated underscoring made the others think Alexander was being too cautious as they reasoned that although poisoning one's hated rival was not unheard of, it was not as if nobles were falling like flies all around them.

In fact, such occurrences were really once-in-a-blue moon happening.

But Alexander didn't feel it that way.

After the dinner conversation, he was again made aware that the guests living with him were not harmless, innocent beings, but scheming spiders who had little love for him.

And he shared such worries with the girls, "All of you have seen what happened at the dinner table just now. So who knows if they will get some ideas out of spite or bitterness? Remember, Mikaya's two maids have free access to the kitchen!"

Cambyes too helped build support for Alexander, "Alex is right. It's said Ptolomy is madly in love with the Queen-mother and Hellma. So, it's possible he might do something stupid to get them back more quickly. And also don't forget, the previous king was also poisoned by the Queen-mother."

Gelene too jumped in with her own warning, "I have seen the food preparations for us when we were in Adhan. Its security was exactly like how it is ours. If the Queen-mother can penetrate that, she can penetrate ours."

"Fine, fine. I get it. I will be extra careful." Mean promised in a bit irritated voice, annoyed that the others were questioning her capabilities and work integrity,

"Ahem, master," A mellifluous voice that had yet to speak rang out.

It was Ophenia.

"While I was in the temple, I noticed that the supplies meant for the higher-ups like the archpriest and the sacred priestess were always bought and kept separate from the rest of the kitchen supplies. Also, special attention was given to make sure that the two supplies were never interchanged,"

Ophenia made her suggestion using some of her own shared experience.

And continued.

"Furthermore, the cooks were every day stripped and their clothes and bodies were thoroughly checked for any contraband before they could enter or leave the kitchen."

And even then, the kitchen would at times get surprise visits from some special priests that would check the kitchen for any dumped or hidden goods that might have escaped inspection."

The food security in the temple was no joke.

This level of prudence shocked everybody hearing such, as Alexander asked the question everyone had in their minds, "What happened at the temple that they took such draconian measure?"

Ophenia obediently answered, "Historically, during its adolescent years, the temple of Shiva had suffered a series of high-profile poison assassinations from rival temples which almost destroyed it, This then led the archpriest at that time to develop such security methods. And a hundred years later, they still strictly adhere to it."

"Hmm, such things shouldn't be known to even insiders in the temple." Cambyses was basically asking how Ophenia came to know such a secret.

"As their intended successor of the Sacred Priestess, I was taught to cook for the higher-ups and thus had access to the kitchen." Ophenia gave her reason.

"Ohhh? Taiyin can cook? I must taste her homemade meals one day," Alexander joked with a large smile.

"It would be my greatest honor, master," Ophenia humbly lowered her head.

After a small chuckle, Alexander then made the final decision, "Good, we will do it as Taiyin suggested."

Later adding, " Taiyin, give Mean some tips on how the temple did it and help her emulate it."

Done with that, Alexander was about to move on, but then a thought came back to him.

"Ohhh, Mean, I almost forgot. What's the name of that mama? I want to reward her." Alexander asked.

"That...I'll ask," Mean said after a bit of pause.

It was after all impossible for the girl to know the name of all the hundreds of servants under her.

And this little exchange suddenly reminded Alexander of something vital,

"Names! The uniforms don't have names! " Alexander exclaimed.

And then even more loudly said, "The uniforms must have names."

And the ID was born.

Chapter 204 Chief Of Staff (Mass Release)

Mean's little ignorance reminded Alexander of the importance of identity and specifically identity cards.

And so he decided to make each of the slaves and servants and even the palace guards wear name tags.

Thus he informed to Mean, "I have decided to add something to the uniforms."

And added, "Each of the uniforms must have an extra piece of cloth attached to them, On that cloth, sewn will be the wearer's name and the name of his or her immediate superior."

And further added, "And from next Sunday, there must be a roll call for all the staff at the start of every shift in the morning and another one at the end of the shift in the evening. And anyone late or absent must show appropriate cause or receive the appropriate punishments like pay docks, reduced meals, more work hours or in the most severe case imprisonment and even death."

Alexander gave a large number of instructions that Mean had a hard time keeping up with.

So, Alexander asked for a piece of papyrus and wrote everything down marked using bullet points, while giving Mean another additional task, "I also want you to make a primary list of common mistakes a staff makes, and the kind of punishments each of the infractions should have. Submit it to me for review on the first of December."

"I...I will see it done," Mean said with a slow, heavy nod, the amount of work and responsibility on her slowly beginning to dawn.

"Haha, Mean thought she could just boss around the servants all day and have it easy. Hahaha," Cambyses who knew the petite girl very well laughed at her 'misfortune', which made Mean let out a shy smile after having her secret exposed.

Alexander too let out a small smile as he turned to Mean and patted her shoulder. "We are entrusting the managing of this house to you. It will not be easy and you will have your job cut out for you. But I believe in you."

Alexander looked Mean straight in the eye as he said this, causing the petite girl to flush and turn her head away in shyness.

"Awww, look what you did Alex. You made little Mean blush, hehe," Cambyses teasing caused Mean to blush even more furiously.

"Congratulations, sister. We will be depending on you!" Ophenia was the first to applaud Mean on her new responsibility.

Followed by Gelene, "Haha, with sister Mean's diligence, we can all eat our meals in safety."

"Hehe, Mean don't let some servant kill me under your watch," Cambyses giggled, she being the only one who would talk to Mean like that.

But one word said by Cambyses made Alexander remember something.

So clearing his throat with an, "Ahem", he drew attention toward himself, "Please note that the House of Alexander will not call the people it employs slaves or servants. I detest those words."

Alexander had a stern tone to his voice and it didn't take a genius why he felt that way.

"You want us to call them staff?" Cambyses cleverly made the connection.

"Yes." Alexander nodded, saying, "As part of my house, it is my wish that you will address all that work for us as staff. The slaves will be called bound staff and the regular people just staff."

"Haha, master already treats us slaves better than those princesses staying in the manor. Anyone able to work under him as the luck of ten lifetimes," Gelene flattered.

"Yes, only someone as kind as him is fit to call himself blessed by the gods. What Ptolomy or Amenheraft?" Alexander for the first time saw what a haughty and disdainful Ophenia looked like.

"We have no problem with it," Cambyses, as the leader gave her consent, representing all others.

"Good," Alexander nodded with a smile.

Then formally declared, "From today onward, Mean will have the title of 'Chief of Staff', This post will earn her a yearly salary of ten thousand ropals (10,000) ropals."

"For this, her responsibilities will include managing the staff employed in the house and ensuring the hospitality of its inhabitants, from food, to clean clothes, to proper bedding and all other house-related activities."

Given the average peasant made only two thousand ropals a year for his entire family, the salary offered by Alexander was very large, especially when considering Mean would have basically no living expenses, as not just her food and shelter, but even her clothing, medicine and transportation would be born by Alexander.

The ten thousand ropal was just an 'extra.'

Hearing the large monetary reward, instead of jumping for joy, Mean stammered a little, "Th...that. I can do all the work without the money."

Then as if she had finished convincing herself, Mean vigorously nodded her head as she repeated, "Yes, that's right. Everything I could ever ask for is given to me even before I open my mouth. I know that money is tight for us now, so...really I don't need it."

Although Mean made some good arguments, Alexander would not rescind it.

"We don't make anyone work without pay. That's not how we do things," Alexander unequivocally stated.

Then added, "Don't underestimate us too much. Although coin is somewhat short right now, but this small amount of money is not enough to make or break us," He brushed off Mean's economic concerns.

Then reasoned, "And it's always nice to have some spending money with oneself. You will have hundreds of staff under you. And there will be occasions where you will want to reward some of them for a job well done. Then you might feel inconvenienced to ask me or Cambyes for money. So it's better that you have some of it."

Alexander made some very solid points, but even after hearing them, Mean was reluctant, feeling the money was too large for her to accept.

Until Cambyse stepped in.

"Mean, just accept it. Think of it as Alexander's dowry to you," She joked causing the short girl to flush a bit.

'Mistress bullies me too,' Mean shyly complained in her heart, while also thinking, 'And it's a girl who pays the dowry.'

But she did not have the guts to correct her mistress nor did she want to resist Cambyse's suggestion.

So, with a lowered head, she cutely nodded, "Okay."

"*Clap*, *clap*, *clap*."

Seeing Mean assent to her new post and pay, first Ophenia and then all others again congratulated Mean on her new post.

"Thank you, I will do my best." Receiving their adoration, Mean promised them.

While in her heart the tsundere considered, 'Hmm, Alex isn't too bad a man. Maybe being with him wouldn't be too bad.'

This was because what Alexander had given her was not such empty promises or honeyed words, but money and power.

The money was actually secondary.

Because the ten thousand ropals (10,000) though large in number was not even worth mentioning in front of Mean's real prize, actual tangible power.

Alexander had given her dominion over the house, letting her rule the thirty thousand (30,000) square feet, more than a thousand-room palace, with hundreds of men and women at her beck and call.

From today she would be their master, their judge, jury, and executioner, and the feeling of having such power at one's fingertips, such control over another's life and ability to employ such power till the day she died, made Mean's heart throb to high heavens.

And this was not even her greatest gain.

Because by making her oversee his food security, more importantly, Alexander had displayed just how much he trusted Mean.

And by extension, by giving her such a critical job, he had made Mean someone he couldn't piss off in fear of retaliation.

Such trust and reliance by the master of the house, no, the master of the city was something priceless.

Who needs coin if they were friends with the guys who literally has the power to mint coin?

After Alexander said finished his congratulations, he was about to move on, when Cambyses suddenly in a teasing tone reminded, "Alex, aren't you forgetting something?"

'Forget? I don't think so,' Alexander said to himself.

"What?" He asked curiously.

"You once asked about that mama's name, remember?" Cambyses showed off her good memory.

"Ohhh, right! I had completely forgotten about that!" Alexander exclaimed at his forgetfulness.

Then he quickly turned to Mean and said, "Remember to get me that woman's name by tomorrow. She's very diligent in her work and has sharp eyes."

"I will ask Junicus about her. He is bound to know her," Mean said with a nod.

"Umm," Alexander hummed a reply of approval.

And then said, "Also, make sure to employ her in the small kitchen once it's built."

"Okay, I'll employ her as a guard then. She's got sharp eyes, and the courage she displayed when she was willing to confront an unknown intruder even bare-handed is very admirable." Mean took her own initiative.

"Um...I will write a letter of excellence about her and you will read it aloud to all the servants. This will help motivate others to work harder." Alexander finished by saying this.

Chapter 205 Lingerie (Mass Release)

After Alexander was done dealing with the kitchen matters, he turned to Cambyes, "How's the recruitment going? Is Bartholomew doing his job okay?"

Cambyes replied with a smile, "Yes. I asked him to make a list of the teams and their captains.

We also talked to Menes about it and he consented to the transfer."

But then she added with a touch of concern, "Though his grumpy face said that he will take it up with you tomorrow."

Alexander simply brushed off such concerns, "Menes isn't hard to manage. The man has a good heart and he will understand."

Gelene and Mean didn't understand what the couple were talking about and although curious, they knew it wasn't their place to ask.

After this short exchange, Alexander turned to Gelene, his main interest for the day.

The black beauty had been relatively quiet up until now, mostly due to the stunning success of Alexander that flamed her ambition and by extension dampened her desire to leave him for Menes.

But Alexander feared if he did not give her any tangible benefits soon, she will start having second thoughts, especially when she would see Alexander favoring the other girls and not her.

So, Alexander decided to give the tall girl something to keep herself busy with.

"Gelene, how goes your day?" Alexander asked with a smile.

"Oh, they would go much faster if the pasha would favor me more," Gelene sultrily said, sending a coy, wounded look at Alexander.

'Ungrateful bitch! Alex stuffs your three holes full every three days and it's still not enough?' Cambyses cursed at Gelene in her heart.

While she and Gelene would regularly share Alexander, having very intimate moments together and showing each other their most shameful sides, neither woman liked each.

No, they were just one level from disliking each other as at best they tolerated each other.

Gelene because she wanted to wrap Alexander between her fingers and Cambyses because she knew the kind of poisonous black snake Gelene was.

But unlike his wife, Alexander seemed to agree with Gelene. "Haha, yes, yes, I have been favoring the other girls more than you. My apologies, my apologies." He bowed.

But this sentence of apparent humility didn't please anyone, especially Gelene, who felt a shiver down her spine at Alexander lowering his head.

She had known Alexander long enough to know when this man would be real with his modesty and when he would be fake.

And as Gelene felt Cambyses's narrowed, gleeful eyes taunting her, she knew she had said too much.

'Darn, seeing the other girls get so much made me too jealous.' Gelene cursed at herself and quickly wanted to rectify her mistake.

"Master...I..did.." She blurted in a half-panicked voice, but she was quickly cut off.

"So to make it up to you I have decided to make you run a business for me!" Alexander announced with a light smile.

"..." Gelene's mouth went silent for a bit as she let her brain process the words.

'Wait, this isn't like Alexander,' She suspiciously muttered in her heart as she had assumed Alexander would start to taunt her.

Outwardly though, responding to Alexander's words, she sat up straight, her eyes sharp and focused, and asked, "What does master want me to do?"

Alexander looked at Gelene with a light smile, thinking to himself, 'Only you can save yourself Gelene.'

Hearing Gelene was interested, he then got up to get some papyrus scrolls from his table drawer, which he gave to Gelene.

Alexander then asked, "How much do you know about designing clothes?"

This out-of-the-blue question confused Gelene but thinking Alexander was going to put her up to make a clothing shop she enthusiastically said, "I can make clothes. I can sew lots of clothes. No problem!"

But the next, this excitement turned to bafflement and a little bit of horror as Alexander simply shook his head, "No, no. Not making clothes. Designing clothes."

"Designing?" Gelene repeated the word, knowing the meaning but understanding little about designing.

"Umm, designing. You will design and make new clothes. And moreover designing a new kind of cloth." Alexander elucidated

He then gestured, "Open the scroll and look."

Hence, Gelene unveiled the scroll under the gaze of curious eyes and the unfamiliar pictures on them caused her eyebrows to frown a bit.

In the first scrolls, there was a picture of what looked like a bare-breasted woman with an arrow next to her pointing to two semicircular-shaped fabrics with some strings attached to them at the ends.

Then immediately below the two pictures was the woman wearing this fabric on her chest, with the description, 'Wearing a bra.'

Gelene then switched to the next scroll which had the picture of a woman's crotch and next to it a triangular piece of cloth with the same kind of strings as before.

And then below it the woman wearing it with the description, 'Wearing a panty'.

After Gelene scanned and re-scanned the few pictures several times, and read the various labels that named what was what, she intuitively understood the purpose of the clothes and tried to visualize how this new kind of cloth would work.

Then, feeling confident that she had understood the general purpose of the clothes, Gelene with a big grin, Gelene giggled, "Hehe, master is truly goddess Gaia's blessed. That's why he takes care of us women so well."

This was a double innuendo joke towards Alexander, both praising his new invention and joking that he had made such a personal piece of feminine clothing.

Alexander only smirked at Gelene and then asked, "So, have you understood what these are?"

"Yes, the picture and the description were quite clear," Gelene cleverly said with a nod.

Then asked, "Does master want me to sell these bras and panties?"

Gelene had a bit of surprise at her tone as selling underwear was not common at this time

Nobles had the corset which they would specifically order, but normally women would wrap their chests with a piece of makeshift cloth when doing work to prevent the tits from bouncing around, and underneath they would just wear a kind of loincloth, used mostly as a crude sanitary napkin during their periods.

This absence of the two most erotic pieces of women clothes had bothered Alexander since he got together with Cambyses and he wanted to introduce them right away.

"Yes, particularly the bras." Alexander pointed.

Then he gave his reason, "The corset that's in use nowadays, with all its wires, padding, and metal bracings is too expensive for the general populace. And it is far too constricting for everyday use in real life."

"And that's where this cheap but comfortable bra comes in. Unlike the breast wrapping that obstructs blood flow to the mammary glands and constricts its growth, this new design snugly wraps around the breast and helps with blood circulation, letting the breasts naturally grow bigger."

"In addition, wearing this will alleviate neck pains, reduce skin irritation and itching and also prevent sagging of the breasts." Alexander gave a perfect salesman's pitch.

"Wow, Alex, you sure you weren't a woman in your previous life?" Cambyes joked hearing Alexander, though the admiration in her eyes was unmistakable.

"Heh, now that I think about it I remember once seeing Alex crossdressing while wearing a corset," Mean too joined her mistress with a sneer as she said the completely made-up story.

She was especially salty about this 'bra' because Alexander's new invention was of no use to her.

No, she felt like it was an insult to her, who, despite being older than Cambyes had a washboard for a chest, with just two small, perky nipples attached to her chest.

"Hahaha," Mean's fabricated story had the intended effect as it produced a string of laughter even from Ophenia.

Hearing the girls laugh at his expense, Alexander playfully swore in his heart. 'This pipsqueak and her mistress! Just because they got no frontal asset...hmmmp.'

After being done with the laughs, Gelene, at last, returned to the topic at hand, "How does master want me to sell these?"

And Alexander gave the answer, "I will give you fifty slave seamstresses. First, you are to have them make some practice ones and test them within the palace. You can give them as free samples to the various staff, and ask them about the size, comfort, and general feeling of the underwear."

"Then, like clothes you will have to come up with the different sizes of the bra. Since breast sizes differ quite a bit, the choice of cup volume must be varied enough so people can easily buy one without needing to order one specifically for them." Alexander pointed out.

"And after all that's been done, you will have to contact cloth suppliers, make enough stock of the thing, launch an advertising campaign to let people know what the brand new thing you are selling, and after all that can you open shop." Alexander gave a general road map to Gelene's shop.

Chapter 206 Educating The Girls (Mass Release)

Alexander's 'simple' plan for the business had Gelene tongue-tied.

"Alex, slow down. Not everyone is quick as you," Seeing Gelene in a difficult position, Cambyses decided to help her out as a gesture of goodwill.

"Ahh, right." Alexander let out a light smile of realization.

Then handed Gelene a piece of papyrus and told, "Write. I will dictate the points."

And after Gelene finished, Alexander gave her further tips, "My suggestion is you make the bra sizes differ by an inch, i.e- the larger cup of the bra should be one inch deeper than the previous one."

"And let me now show you how to calculate the breast size," Saying this Alexander got up and from the back of his table brought a wooden ruler and some strings.

Then he signaled to Ophenia, "Tayin, stand before me and raise your arms."

Once Ophenia got in position, Alexander got behind her with the string and looked at Gelene, "First you measure what is called the under-bust size. The name gives you the clue about what it is. To do this, you take your string and wrap it around the bust just below the breast." Alexander showed as he told.

"And then you take the measured string, lay it next to a ruler, and note the corresponding number. For example, Tayin's underbust is thirty-four inches." Alexander said the measured number.

"Afterward, you measure the breast size." Alexander then wrapped the string lightly around Ophenia's perky breasts and using the previous method got thirty-eight.

"And then you subtract the breast size from the underbust size, or the bigger from the smaller number and you get the bra size." Alexander finished his demonstrations.

"Alex, you sure weren't a girl in your previous life?" Cambyes asked the question that had crept into many's minds.

'Well, I did once have people to buy lingerie for if that's what you're asking?' Alexander muttered in his heart but answered Cambyes with only a smile.

Then quickly he turned to Gelene, "Can you do substractions?"

"...." Gelene awkwardly avoided eye contact at this question.

This was not anything surprising as Gelene had only learned to read and write from Alexander, but never bothered to learn maths, unlike Cambyes and Mean.

Her brain could subconsciously do it when money was involved but whenever it was something else and it exceeded her twenty fingers, like many, Gelene struggled.

"Heh, Alex, you sure you want 'her' to run a business," Cambyes could not resist the taunt.

"Don't think yourself too highly Cam, you aren't much better either," Alexander shot Cambyes a penetrating look, causing the girl to shrink a bit.

'Hey, don't blame me for your bad choices,' Cambyes sulked.

Alexander then turned to look at all four of them, "Forgetting Gelene's mathematical deficiencies, one thing that has irked me is that all of you use Thesian even when you talk to people who don't understand it as you cannot speak or understand Azhak."

"This is not acceptable. Zanzan will be our home till we die and all of you need to be able to communicate with the people living in them."

Alexander then turned to Ophenia, "Tayin, as the sacred priestess, how will you preach if the people don't even understand you? Use a translator?"

"You think the people will trust you preaching a foreign religion in a foreign language?" Alexander pointedly asked causing the beautiful girl to lower her head in shame.

Done chiding Ophenia, Alexander turned to his next prey, Mean.

"And you Mean." Alexander glared at the now-turned-timid girl.

"Other than the odd twenty handfuls who used to work for our mercenary group, the hundreds of staff under you are all Adhanias. Do they speak Thesian or Azhak?" Alexander sneered.

"And that's not to mention the two thousand slaves we have in the servants' quarters." He added.

"When I went to see you in the kitchen, half the time you used your body language, and half the time you had someone else translate the order. Is this how you run the house? By dancing and using a translator like a clutch?" Alexander scolded, causing the small girl's face to shrink like a dried grape.

Alexander's harsh tone then changed to a soft, understanding one, "Mean, you have been chosen by me as the representative of this house. And in the future, there will be many guests such as nobles that stay here. As their host will you speak to them in Thesian? Or do you expect them to speak Thesian?"

"....." By this point, Mean had done quite as a church mouse.

"Alex, you are being too hard on her. It's been just two months since we came here. She hasn't learned yet but will learn." Cambyses jumped in like a mother hen seeing Alexander bully her favorite girl.

"....." Alexander just pursed his lips as he consented to Cambyses's sound excuse.

Thus, taking a deep sigh, he said, "Okay, you don't know but must now. Tayin needs it to preach properly, Mean to command the staff under her, Cam to talk to the general populace, and Gelene to talk to the customer."

Alexander then gave them his study routine, "Thus, from next week, you will practice Azhak every two hours, five days a week. I will get an instructor and join you too. My mastery of it is also very weak.

Alexander's rigid routine caused some girls to sigh inwardly.

They felt that the language difference was really not that big of an issue and didn't want to learn this new language.

And even in Alexander's previous life, there were many historical precedents, one of the most prominent being King George I of England, who couldn't speak English and so he and his Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, communicated in very bad Latin.

But Alexander would not look at George I as his role model and follow his route, and noticing the girl's demeanor, he said an Arab proverb, "Learn a language and you'll avoid a war."

The smart girls of course understood its meaning, i.e- them being a foreign, mostly unwelcomed force, people would look for any kind of excuse to attack them.

And thus it would be wise to try and mix with them.

So, they reluctantly but understandingly nodded.

But Alexander was not yet done setting the hours for the girls.

"After the two hours, the next hour, I will teach all of maths and other stuff. All of you are lacking a lot of basic knowledge and must gain so to run the fiefdom efficiently when I'm away," Alexander planned to teach them basic physics, chemistry, and biology, in addition to some more advanced business and humanities things like economics, sociology, and accounting, many of those that Alexander took in university as supplementary courses.

"Haaah, Alex, you sure have energy." Cambyses lampooned with a large sigh at the three hours of additional work.

"You should have been born a donkey. Cause you can work like one!" Mean was even more acidic in her remark, still sulking that Alexander had scolded her.

"*Smirk*" Alexander only smirked at the slight, saying, "A dream does not become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination, and hard work."

"We will try our utmost master," Ophenia solemnly bowed and others too expressed similar thoughts.

"Hmm," Alexander hummed in approval.

Then as he tried to think back on what he was discussing, he lost track and asked, "So where were we?"

"Umm, subtractions," Gelene said pointing to the papyrus that had Ophenia's measurements.

"Ohh yeah. Bras and panties! I was giving you tips about the new underwear," It all came back to Alexander.

Then turning to Gelene, he said, "Pay more attention to the bra. The panties are much simpler. You should have no problems with them."

"Master, I understand the bra, but the panties seem just like a loincloth. Why make them?" Gelene pointed out.

And her point was very valid as the panties were more of a fashion choice rather than a necessary one.

So why did Alexander invent them?

"It's because panties are erotic." Alexander passionately declared.

"Huh?" Gelene audibly gasped in confusion at Alexander's answer, thinking it was a joke.

But it wasn't as Alexander went on to explain, "The loincloths are too simple and unattractive. The square cloth wraps the entire lower region and doesn't tantalize the male sense."

Then clenching his fist, he announced to the world, "But the panty! The panty's shape is divine."

"It covers just the secret place, but not the creamy thighs that nestle it. Its thin seam wraps around the sexy, wide hips of the woman drawing attention to them but does not flaunt them shamelessly."

"And last of all, at the back, the panties hide the most shameful parts of the butt, the crack, but not the fleshy cheeks, letting the man marvel at the beautiful globules from behind and tingling this desire to cop a feel, squeeze them and conquer them." Alexander had an almost crazy, zealous look as he talked about the panty.

And letting his passion get to him, he even shouted, "Viva panties!"

Chapter 207 Gelene's Challenges (Mass Release)

Alexander was an ass man, though he loved boobs as much as the next man, finding the mammary globules rising out of the chest and their way of bouncing and jiggling very sexy.

But he had always felt the way a woman would swing her butt was much more hypnotic and much more erotic than boobs.

And while he very much enjoyed kneading and sucking breasts of all shapes and sizes, for him, the butt offered all those and something more, a hole to mate with its owner.

And it would be a rough, raw, brutal, animalistically mating that was kinky and somewhat immoral, something that seemed absent with breasts according to Alexander.

That too was one of the many reasons for Alexander to fall in love with Cambyses, who had a pear-shaped body which he found very attractive.

And thus, as a connoisseur of beautiful, sexy lingerie, Alexander wanted to see Cambyses and by extension, all of his harem girls in panties of all colors and shapes, decorating their creamy butts and also their breasts with such sexy fabric.

Alexander's passionate and articulate lecture on the virtue of a simple triangular loincloth surprised the girls for a moment, especially his 'Viva panties' declaration.

"Phhfff, hahaha, oh Alex..hahaha," Cambyses was the first to break, as she couldn't hold back her laughter at Alexander's fetish.

"So is that what you are into, hahaha?" She then asked while rubbing tears from the corner of her eyes.

"Hehe, master is a man of great taste," Gelene too giggled.

"Now that I think about it Master took my rear before my front, hehehe," Ophelia too giggled with a sly smile.

The only one left was Mean, who due to her petite size had little assets and just pouted and sulked.

"Hmmp, we will see who's laughing when you actually put on the clothes," Alexander swore to the girls with a 'wait and see' look which caused even more strings of laughter.

After the girls had finally finished finding Alexander's particular preferences risible, and the room calmed down, Alexander again addressed Gelene, "Who do you think we should target these clothes towards?"

"Hmmm," Hearing the question, Gelene put her hand on her chin and ruminated with a small frown.

Because, unlike modern times, where clothes were quite cheap, clothes of this time were expensive.

For context, in the US, one could buy a decent T-shirt for fifteen (15) dollars, something that would cost just half an hour of someone's minimum wage.

But here, a simple tunic would cost hundred and twenty to hundred and thirty ropals!

Almost an entire month's pay!

Even just the raw fabric to make the tunic, without any stitches or tailoring would cost half as much.

When Alexander had first seen the prices he had a minor heart attack and it was only then he could really relate to his knowledge that people long ago would have one or two good clothes, and they would repeatedly mend clothes rather than buy new ones.

And this was what Gelene considering, which people would buy this fancy 'dress'.

Farmers? Peasants? Day laborers?

'No, too poor,' She estimated that just buying and tailoring costs of the two pieces would be sixty to seventy ropals.

And then there was the dyeing, transportation, labor, and rent.

Plus taxes.

"Ninety to one hundred," Gelene subconsciously muttered loud the price of the twin clothes.

Then turning to Alexander, Gelene replied, "We will target primarily nobles and high-level government employees. Also, rich merchants and affluent townsfolk like well-to-do artisans."

"Umm," Alexander nodded, then asked, "And?"

"And?..." Gelene looked in askance, trying to think which category she had missed.

"Priestesses and whores!" The answer came from an unlikely but also reasonable source, Ophenia, the girl having spent her time with many girls to were both and herself too almost becoming one.

Alexander turned to give Ophenia a slight smile, and said with a nod, "Yes, Tayin is correct. The temple and by extension the priestess' have a lot of money and will certainly want these fashion accessories. And the brothels are self-explanatory."

'Fuck...I can't believe I forgot about the brothels,' Gelene cursed herself.

Her innate desire to forget her past had subconsciously made her forget about the red-light district's existence.

Alexander started again, addressing Gelene, "Since we will be targeting the upper echelons of Adhania, the rich and the uber-rich, the product must be equally worthy."

"The quality of the clothes is a must, but also have to be of beautiful design. The bras should be very sexy to look at, drawing one's eyes to the breasts and the panties should hug the hips, attenuating the curves. And all this must happen without compromising on comfort." Alexander gave Gelene a list of criteria that the underwear must qualify for.

"And that's why I asked you at the very beginning if you knew how to design clothes. Because you will need to design new and sexy lingerie regularly to attract these customers repeatedly." Alexander finished.

'*Sigh*', so detailed and far-sighted," The four girls began to understand that Alexander's success was no fluke.

Behind every action laid many hours of rumination.

"I will try my utmost. Please guide me, master," Gelene had a steely, determined look as she said such.

"Haha, sure," Alexander smiled, adding, "I will give you twenty thousand roplas and two months to test, advertise and then make the final product. So your shop opening deadline is the day after New Year's day."

"Thank you, master," Gelene stood up and gave a full bow just like a commoner would give to a noble, truly grateful for giving her the opportunity.

Done with the product, Gesturing to get up, Alexander then asked the ebony beauty, "So, how much of the business do you want?"

'How much?' Gelene wondered.

Then she spoke with a smile, "I'm happy with whatever master gives me."

"Gelene, don't give me that diplomatic crap. Speak a number that you want!" Alexander firmly instructed.

"That..." Gelene's eyes darted around as she hesitated to say the number in her mind.

'Should I ask for so much? What if he takes everything back?' Gelene feared.

But then inwardly she convinced herself, "No, no, this is a negotiation. It is normal to ask for more and then reach an appropriate amount by bargaining.'

Greed having won the struggle, Gelene, with anticipation and a trace of fear in her voice, said shakily, "That....then... five percent?"

The statement sounded more like a question than a demand.

'You money-grabbing ungrateful whore' Cambyse's heart burned with rage at the huge demand, Gelene's image in her head changing from a human to a greedy shark.

According to her reasoning, it was Alexander who was doing everything, giving her a brand new, very lucrative invention, the start-up capital, the land, the shop, and the labor.

What was Gelene giving unique to Alexander?

Nothing.

She was just an ordinary woman that Alexander happened to find near hand.

'One percentage. No, half a percent. Alex should give her half a percent,' Cambyses clenched her fist as she cheered for Alexander in her heart.

"Five percent?" Alexander repeated, raising an eyebrow and looking at Gelene in askance.

"..." Gelene fought her instinct to look away from Alexander's penetrative gaze and instead gazed directly into his azure eyes, and answered Alexander with a nod.

The stand-off lasted for what seemed like an eternity to Gelene, though it was only for a few seconds.

And Alexander was the first to break it off and then smiled at Gelene, "Five percent is too small. I will give you fifty percent!"

"What!" This was shouted by Cambyses, who was outraged at Alexander's offer.

But before she could get off on a tirade, Alexander sent her a scary glare that made the girl shut up and obediently sit.

'It is my decision and you are not to interfere,' The blazing eyes told Cambyses.

"That...master, fifty is too much. I...I'm happy with five," Gelene stammered, not knowing what Alexander's game was.

He was being uncharacteristically generous to her.

"You will get fifty percent of the profits because I said so." Alexander firmly asserted.

And added, "What's more if you make me a million ropas in profit I will set you free. If you make me a further ten million ropas I will make you a shordar (Baroness). And if you make me a further hundred million, I will make you a talukder (viscount) and sell the business to you."

Alexander's terms were so attractive that they left not just Gelene but the other three as well with gaping mouths.

Alexander let the girls slowly work the terms he offered, who found the eleven million ropal price for freedom and nobility a steal.

Especially Gelene, who had more business experience than the others and knew the kind of profit boundaries she could run serving nobles.

A hundred percent to even a thousand percent was not impossible, and so she conservatively estimated that in twenty years she could go from a slave to being part of Adhania's top one percent.

A preposterous thought even a few minutes ago.

Chapter 208 Gelene's Choice

Gelene was feeling very overwhelmed by Alexander's offer, so much so that she seemed to have lost her voice even when she wanted to express her gratitude towards Alexander, just looking at Alexander with glazed, grateful eyes.

This was what Gelene had always wanted, no her dreams were smaller than that, only wanting to latch herself onto a powerful enough man who would not treat her like dirt and let her live a dignified life.

A life where she would not have to wake up at the call of the rooster, work her back off the entire day-tending to the house, cooking and cleaning, taking care of the brats around her, helping out in the fields, and a million other chores, all for her to drag her exhausted body back to bed at the end of it all.

And what would be her reward for all her work?

To be able to barely meet her needs at the end of the day and to be hounded by cold, hunger, and disease all her life, her beauty destroyed, her spine bent and her hands and feet callused.

And this fate would be if she was lucky and her husband a good man!

If he was an alcoholic or a sadistic...her life would be hell.

This was something Gelene would never willingly accept and vowed to change it.

And this was why she was so scheming and manipulative.

Because if her default fate was to suffer, she would do anything to change that, no matter what.

And if that meant stepping over other men and women to achieve that, if it meant lying, cheating, and backstabbing them, then so be it, better them than her.

This was also why she and Cambyses were like fire and water.

Because while Cambyses would make any kind of sacrifice for Alexander, Gelene would only sneer at the thought.

She would even mock Cambyses in her heart, 'Heh, do you think Alexander would make the same kind of sacrifices you are ready to for him? No!' feeling Alexander was just like her, a super ambitious individual willing to get his hands dirty to make his life better.

And whenever Cambyses would make an innuendo that she was a lying, manipulative, poisonous snake, Gelene would fight the urge to retort, 'You just described your husband too you know'.

She was right in saying such of course, as Alexander was far bigger of a liar than her, his latest lie letting him steal ten billion ropals.

He was a master manipulator as evidenced by him turning Ptolomy, the king into a puppet.

And his poisonous hand was one of the deadliest in the world, as Aristotle, Damious, and Pallidus could testify, along with all the innocent artisans and noble women and children.

What was even more hypocritical in Gelene's eyes was that it was Cambyses who had poisoned her own godfather to death, which was an open secret among the higher echelons of Alexander's command, yet she had the gall to call Gelene scheming and ungrateful.

'You are the snake that bit the hand that fed you, all for your lover. So, where do you get off with that holier than thou attitude,' Gelene would retort to Cambyses's hostility in her heart, feeling she was only doing the same things Cambyses and Alexander were doing.

Hence she felt nothing but disdain for the mistress of the house, labeling her as a hypocrite just as Cambyses labeled her a snake.

But now all these could change.

All these could change if she would just accept Alexander's offer, which would let her very soon be no longer a slave but a freedwoman.

And sometime later she could even become a noblewoman with her own land!

This was an attraction irresistible to her.

In fact, it would be difficult for any modern person to relate to an ancient person on just how strong the attraction for the offer was.

Modern people might like real estate, but because they have alternative options to invest in, they were not obsessed with it.

This was not the case for ancient people, for whom acquiring land was like acquiring the money printer, a source of infinite wealth.

This was because the agrarian nature of the society meant that the manufacturing industry was not really there, and so the land was the primary source of income, mainly through farming.

And as long as the land remained, the crops would grow, people would buy and the coins would keep coming.

If Gelene took Alexander's offer she could do what she had once craved, reach financial and even legal autonomy, unfettered by the whims of any man.

"Mas...master's offer is too generous. Gelene's only desire is to be your slave and serve you." Gelene had said the complete opposite of what her heart desired.

Absurd!

Or this is what seemed to all three others.

'Is she really loyal? Have I been mistreating her?' Cambyses found herself confused.

Even Alexander was astonished by the reply, though for different reasons.

'She's smarter than I gave her credit for.' Alexander remarked.

Because he could vaguely understand Gelene's reasoning behind her answer.

After Gelene would become a freedwoman, she could no longer by default stay with Alexander, meaning she would lose her proximity to Alexander.

Thus Gelene rightfully feared that she would lose Alexander's favor, which was Alexander's plan all along, to set up Gelene as a civilian and let her live her life on her own.

Alexander would give her enough means to enjoy her life as she wanted, and as long as she stayed put enjoying her wealth and didn't scheme against him, Alexander couldn't care less what she did with her time.

So to be able to see this well-hidden trap, intentionally or by fluke, certainly impressed Alexander.

If he could trust her more, she would not just be a mere merchant but part of his ruling class.

"So, what are your terms of the business arrangement?" Alexander asked Gelene in a flat tone.

"Master, I can accept all the terms, but I don't want to be free. I like being your slave. Besides women can't become landlords with a man's approval," Gelene declared, though she knew the latter part was moot, as Alexander, being the owner of the lands could change the laws on a whim.

Gelene's head had told her to take Alexander's initial offer and run with it, but her heart commanded her to stop.

Her instincts screamed that losing Alexander's ears, the ears of the miracle boy who went from a slave to a pasha in less than two mouths, the miracle boy who could make revolutionary, epoch-changing inventions like pulling rabbits out of a hat, would be a very bad idea.

And so Gelene decided to stay with Alexander for now.

Because she felt she would gain much more from being his slave than she would gain from being free and all by herself.

"Hmmm," Alexander hummed thinking this was not how the script was supposed to go.

In his mind, Gelene would gleefully accept the offer and a few years later, he would be able to get rid of this troublesome entity.

But hearing Gelene's counteroffer, Alexander then replied, "Okay, let's put the topic of emancipation off for now. Earn me the million in profit first and if even then you don't want to be free, we can work out some other kind of arrangements." Alexander promised.

"I will not leave you, master," Gelene repeated the words, her tone firm and strong.

Alexander lightly smiled at Gelene and then soon the duo had drawn up a contract.

As Gelene finished signing the contract, Alexander decided to tease the soon-to-be rich beauty.

"Haha, so have I favored you enough?" Alexander hadn't forgotten that jab as he smirked.

This immediately caused Gelene to blush and she then let out an awkward smile as in her heart Gelene cursed, 'I knew he was that vindictive bastard,' as the thought of Alexander as a kind, magnanimous man evaporated.

Alexander had done this intentionally as he did not want to let the other girl and also Gelene get the wrong idea that he would favor her infinitely.

Gelene certainly understood this knowing what Alexander had asked was not a question or a jab, but for proof of her loyalty, Gelene silently got down, kneeled, and then prostrated, "I swear to serve master with utmost loyalty and devotion. If I break it may the heavens damn my soul for eternity."

Gelene solemn declaration pleased Alexander.

'And here I was about to go on about how if you betray me I will do such and such,' Alexander now found it inappropriate to bring up such threats.

So he only nodded and said, "Good, I will hold you onto that promise. If you are loyal to me, I will loyally treat you. If you are not, I will not too."

And only time would tell if Gelene would be loyal or if would she let the shine of gold and silver tempt her to break her promise.

Chapter 209 Ophenia's Gift

After ironing things out with Gelene, Alexander moved on to his last interest of the day, Ophenia.

"So, what did you want to talk to me about?" He asked turning to the fair woman.

"That..." Ophenia's eyes darted uncomfortably at the question, and then finally picking up the courage, she said, "Um, master. I want to tell this to you alone."

This predictable raised some eyebrows as people like Cambyses wondered what could be so important that Ophenia couldn't say out aloud in front of them.

Cambyses and Ophenia usually got along very well as the latter didn't have twists in her heart, unlike someone else, a person that recently got a deal that Cambyses found too favorable.

Alexander too was surprised as he couldn't think of anything Ophenia might have to say that would necessitate such secrecy.

But deciding to respect Ophenia's wishes he gestured to the other three, "It's getting a bit stuffy in here. So, why don't you three take a small stroll? I will call you when done."

Thus the three vacated the room, with Cambyses even saying with a bit of sneer, "Let's go girls.

The divine son wants to enjoy his sacred priestess."

'It was Tayin that wanted you out. How come I became the bad guy?' Alexander lampooned, while Ophenia looked even more guilty, though she did not stop the exodus.

Once alone, Alexander turned to Ophenia and asked with a raised eyebrow, "So, what's the secret?"

But instead of getting an answer, he saw Ophenia get down and start scribbling on a piece of papyrus.

Alexander looked at the papyrus with curiosity, wondering what information could be so valuable, and noticed Ophenia writing what he supposed to be mostly ingredients, and their preparation.

Soon after, the girl was done and handing over the scroll to Alexander, Ophenia explained, "Master, remember I told you that the Temple of Shiva was famous for its aphrodisiac medicine? Well, this is how it's made!"

Alexander's hands subconsciously jerked at this explosive news as he couldn't believe such a gold mine had fallen in his hand.

Instead of asking further questions, he immediately pointed his eyes to the papyrus, trying to read and memorize its contents as soon as possible.

And he found both the ingredients common and the manufacturing process nothing too difficult.

There was cutting and mixing the plants, boiling them at a low, simmering temperature, leaving them to fermentation in a cold, dark place for some time, again boiling them to drive all the water away, and at last mashing the leftover pulp and adding it another ingredient.

This solid would then be mixed with wine and sold in batches.

"Ho...how did you get this?" Alexander's voice had never shaken ever since he had transmigrated.

And thus it was a testament to how valuable this information was.

In his previous life, men had done crazy things to obtain greater mastery over his sexual prowess, ranging from eating ordinary things like raw ginseng, and other herbs and plants, to bizarre things like cooked and in some extreme cases raw animal penis and balls, including those of domestic animals like bulls and horse to exotic ones bears and tigers, to insane things like cannibalism because these mad men believed that it would make obtain the other's prowess as his own.

And from what Ophenia had told him about the riches of the Shiva temple and how powerful men would tend to curry favor with it, it seemed this world was no different.

"Once I was offered a reward of my choice for my good performance." Ophenia said the word 'performance' with heavy quotations implying what kind of performance that was and continued, "And I asked them to teach me how to make the Divine Nectar."

"Oh? As I recall you were never officially part of the temple. So nobody objected to letting you learn their most treasured secrets?" Alexander asked the obvious question.

Given the cooking security of the temple as described by Ophenia, Alexander didn't find them to be the type to be flippant about such matters.

"Of course, some objected." Ophenia nodded and then with a sly smile added, "But after I spent a bit of time convincing them in private, they assented."

It was clear as day what Opehnia did behind some doors.

'*Sigh*', Alexander let out a mouthful sigh inside his heart hearing this, not blaming Ophenia for what she did to survive, but only feeling pity.

Then Alexander asked his next question, "But why did you want to learn the technique? You didn't know you were ever gonna escape."

"I simply felt that knowing their secret would be a good card to have," Ophenia did this when she was fifteen, showing the girl was far smarter than she was given credit for.

Ophenia might be simple, but no idiot.

Or else the temple would have claimed her long ago.

Alexander was impressed by the foresight displayed by Ophenia and then asked her on how to properly use the stuff, "So, tell me how does the medicine work? And how potent is its effect? And how does it have any hidden dangers?"

Ophenia answered after a slight nod, "The medicine is ingested orally, about a spoonful before sex, by the man. And it makes them harder than usual and prevents wilting for hours, while also reducing the rate of release. Regular usage also boosts the size of the male organ, the volume, the richness of the release, and even its taste and smell."

Alexander raised a suggestive eyebrow at Ophenia's detailed explanation, making an educated guess on how the girl was able to know so much about a very personal man's product.

But Alexander did not need to guess as with a tither Ophenia gave him the answer, "Hehe, master seems to have correctly guessed how I know so much. Yes, it's because I personally experienced it." She confirmed with a grinning nod.

And then delineated, "Promising acolytes, whom I would have to serve, would be regularly given the medicine and these are the changes I observed over the few years I did so. They went from tiny phimosis pee-pees to monstrous, horse-like cocks. And I mean real, manly cocks." Ophenia's eyes twinkled teasingly at Alexander as she said so.

Then she sultrily added. "I mean master has impressive stuff down there no doubt. But in front of them, it would be considered small, hehe."

Ophenia never hid her past from Alexander and would always honestly tell Alexander of her past experience, whether Alexander found it to his liking or not because she felt confident that she would never have to hide her true identity from her master in fear of being shunned.

It was unknown if Ophenia was saying this to demonstrate the drug's capabilities or just egging Alexander on to regularly ingest the drug by brushing his ego, whose ultimate beneficiary would be her.

Maybe it was a mixture of both as she certainly craved an ever bigger Alexander to carve out her insides and make her ascend to high heaven.

And to say this tactic didn't work affect would be a lie.

No man in the world wanted to be called small and innately craved the self-gratification of being called big or even better, somewhere along the lines of the biggest in the world.

Believing that Ophenia would not lie to him just to tease him, Alexander decided to console himself by saying stuff like those were all artificial, 'steroid' pumped fakes, while he was all natural and real and that it was not the size that mattered but how one used it, and much more.

Was it like calling the grapes sour?

Maybe.

Alexander's slight pout didn't escape Ophenia as she let a torrent of pleased giggles at the display, finding his master's reaction quite cute.

Ophenia sometimes, albeit a little guiltily, thought that the death of her father and his fiance was the best thing that had ever happened to her.

Because if they were alive, she would never have met Alexander, a man she truly fell in love with.

Ophenia used to think she loved her deceased fiance Samaras, but as her heart bloomed for Alexander she began to understand what true love was.

True love was one where just hearing the name of the beloved would set one's heart fluttering.

True love was one where you didn't need to think if you loved the beloved, you would know it in your heart, in your body, and in your soul.

True love was one where just seeing the other's face would make your day.

And for Ophenia, Alexander was that kind of true love.

Unlike her finance, who, being raised in a chaste society, would have certainly looked at her with disgust and repulsion if he were to ever know the truth, Alexander would only smooth her by lovingly caressing her silky hair when she would recount her various abuses, all his disgust, and hatred directed towards the temple, with her only receiving pity and love.

Chapter 210 Ophenia's Plan

Ophenia's description of the drug matched very well with Alexander's knowledge of the various erectile-dysfunction drugs in his previous life, though this medicine seemed to have some even more potent benefits.

The erectile-dysfunction drug market was a multi-billion dollar industry in modern times and that just made one hard for a long time.

So, if a one-in-all-wonder drug were to be invented that could do all the things Ophenia had described-make one harder, bigger, and better tasting, then Alexander had no doubt that the market would be worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

As Alexander's realization of this possibility dawned, out of cautiousness he re-read the scroll and then repeated one of the inquiries, "Does the medicine have any harmful effects?"

Ophenia with a shake of the head answered negatively.

Alexander did expect this as if there was some major disadvantage, then someone smart enough would have connected the dots over the last few centuries the Shiva temple had existed.

"So, how do you think we should sell this miracle drug?" Alexander tested Ophenia.

The question made the girl go silent as she gave herself some silence to think and then after a bit, said, "I originally wanted our temple to sell this as the divine nectar of the goddess. But the Temple of Shiva is very over-protective of their product. If such a thing were to appear...." Ophenia sent Alexander a meaningful look.

"Hmmm, you are right. Although we are in a land hostile to Thesos, nothing brings enemies closer than money and mutual benefit," Alexander mused out aloud.

The temple might not be able to attack him directly, but they could certainly bankroll forces hostile to him to do it for them.

And although Alexander was not averse to the idea of others attacking him, he wanted such things to happen on his terms, where he would hold the initiative and could stir the situation to his liking, which would be mighty difficult if a foreign, unpredictable power, whose strengths were unknown to Alexander was to join the fray as he doubted his capability to keep a hold on the situation while juggling so many unknown variables at the same time.

People might view Alexander as a scheming mastermind, but the man himself didn't hold himself in such high regard, thinking himself to be smart but not any Sherlock Holmes.

And so, he always believed in the maxim of keeping plans simple as the more new elements were included into one, the more steps would be introduced and the more complicated it would become, and the more chances there would be of an unpredictable development.

Alexander already had his hands full with Adhania and soon-to-be enemy Tibias and he was even worried that Cantagena would come knocking on his door wanting Zanzan back.

So, he really didn't want to antagonize another power unless he absolutely needed to.

"Hmmm, for the time being, we will sell it secretly in the black market or as bribes to nobles," Alexander made his decision.

And then added, "A few years later the goddess will officially bestow the divine nectar to her believers."

The last sentence was basically said to soothe Ophenia, who certainly felt a bit sour that the drug couldn't be sold openly right now as she believed that Alexander's religion would skyrocket if they could, just like the Temple of Shiva did a few centuries ago.

But unlike Ophenia, Alexander was not obsessed with preaching his religion and instead, his mind wandered to an interesting conclusion, 'I wonder what will happen when Adhania's Legumum comes into contact with the Shiva drug.'

One was primarily a contraceptive designed to prevent conception and the other was a sex performance enhancer.

And so he posed the question to Ophenia, "Does the medicine increase fertility? Can a woman get pregnant even if she uses the legumum contraceptive?"

Ophenia immediately understood Alexander's concerns.

Because if it did, it would become very hard for Alexander to sell the stuff, especially to the nobles, who liked to participate in Adhania's unique tradition and would thus find themselves unable to do so if they ingested the medicine.

The drug might even not be too popular with the general populace as they wouldn't want to knock up random flings.

Ophenia did not know the answer to Alexander's question as legumum was strictly kept within Adhania, and even if the temple of Shiva did get manage to get their hands on the stuff, the results were not within her knowledge.

"I'm sorry I cannot answer that question," Hence Ophenia informed her master.

"Umm, then we will need to find out. We don't want to be responsible for a wide-scale scandal," Alexander prudently decided to hold some long-term tests.

Ophenia silently agreed to this with a nod, her zeal for immediately starting the sale of the drug dying down a bit.

But then quickly she thought of a way to speed up testing, "Master, I have an idea. Please let me set up a brothel!"

This request made Alexander open his eyes in shock as he feared for the reputation of his temple, 'A sacred priestess running a brothel? Ridiculous!' he thought incredulously.

Those were basically two diametrically opposing professions, one that symbolized purity and chastity and the other immorality and lust, and to have a person be both seemed paradoxical and even blasphemous to Alexander.

Seeing Alexander's almost scared expression Ophenia would not help but laugh, "Hehe, master's reactions are too funny. And to think I once thought master would keep that calm, stoic face even if the sky fell on him, hehe."

Alexander wasn't in the mood to be laughing and only thundered, "Explain!"

Although he was sure Ophenia could not just make random demands, if she did now, Alexander fully intended to punish the girl.

"Haha, why does master seems to think the sacred priestess cannot run a brothel? After all, aren't almost all the prestress of the Temple of Shiva both priestesses and whores?" Ophenia corrected Alexander's worldview.

'Yes, that's right! I was thinking with my old values.' Alexander felt his eyes open as before he had always subconsciously equated the priestesses to nuns, who were always officially chaste and pure, and thus this grave reaction.

So, he asked for details, "What are your thoughts?"

With a sweet smile, Ophenia elucidated, "Master, I will be the sacred priestess by the day. But after dark, the priestesses under me can run a brothel."

"They can give a special drink to the customers that will be the Shiva drug will they use the legumum themselves. And in this way, we can find the results very soon."

Ophenia came up with a surprisingly good plan.

And further bolstered her plan by saying, "And as such the customers will be unaware of anything specific and the girls will always be under me."

Alexander found many parts of the plan to be a genius masterstroke.

It was far better than his plan which was to use prisoners as forced lab rats and thus decided implement go with this plan instead, albeit a bit differently.

But before he said his own revised plan, he wanted to know how much more ahead Ophenia had thought of her plan.

"According to you, the priestesses will have to work both day and night. Won't they get tired?" He asked an obvious question.

"Of course not every priestess will work both shifts. They will be rotated," Ophenia gave a very simple solution.

Alexander satisfied with the answer then asked another probing question, "Hmmm, priestesses engaging in such activities. What do you think the people will think?"

"Hehe, master worries too much. The people will think nothing at all." Ophenia waved her hands brusquely as she giggled.

And then gave her reasoning, "The temple of Shiva also had those concerns but found that instead of stunting their growth, the priestesses's whoring themselves only made the belief spread faster."

"After all, the common peasants don't ever even dare dream of touching the mighty priestesses, much less lay with one in bed."

"And so when this opportunity was given to be in exchange for changing their faith, people came in droves."

Ophenia certainly made some very convincing arguments about her plan and Alexander would admit her proposal what a very high chance to work.

And he expressed such thoughts with a pleased smile, "Your proposal is very good. And I'm very pleased that you could come up with such a robust plan in such a short time."

Alexander's praise produced a shy, coy smile from Ophenia.

But then Alexander gave some of his nitpickings. "But for me, it seems a mistake to blatantly copy the Shiva temple's strategy for Adhania."

This made Ophenia look at Alexander in askance, as the latter delineated, "The people of these two regions are very different. While Thesos is a hodgepodge of different gods and beliefs, its people mostly pagans, Adhnaians are all monotheists, and they already have a preconceived notion of a priestess."

And with the following words, Alexander gently rejected Ophenia's plans "And I think it would not be wise to shake that."