

Herald 751

Chapter 751 Lapitus and Petrino (Part-4)

As Lapitus raised his sword to deal the final blow, seeing his life flash before him, Petrino let out one last shout to try and save his life,

"Wait! What do you mean I poisoned her? I never did anything like that. It was Felicia that actually poisoned..."

But Lapitus was fed up with all of Petrino's lies.

Feeling his ears would only hurt to keep listening, Lapitus did not bother to hear the man out, and using his wife's name as the trigger, Lapitus simply swung his weapon, the huge strike managing to separate the neck from the body in one clean cut.

Being able to cut through all that muscle, tissue, and the thick, solid spinal cord in a single swing, went on to show just how strong of a man Lapitus really was.

Thud

As the blade cleaved through the neck, the severed head cleanly rolled onto the sheets with a wet thud, dying them a reddish black hue, the face still sporting the last expression it had made.

It was one of shock and surprise, with a hint of bitterness mixed in.

It was only in his last moments that Petrino truly understood how deeply that woman had played him.

For even with Lapitus providing such a compelling argument against Fabiyana being his daughter, Petrino was still almost certain that she was his.

And the reason he came to that conclusion was because he knew about that poison Lapitus mentioned.

Lady Felicia had used it before!

When Petrino had made her one of his wife's handmaidens, he suspected Lady Felicia of poisoning his wife. rendering her unable to bear any children for him.

And it was through that toxic incense she did it, making her barren and sickly.

As for the reason why.

Petrino suspected that originally, it had been Lady Felicia's plan back then to have a child with him and prevent any others.

That way, with no legitimate heirs, it would make them the only viable successor to his fortunes.

But of course, things did not pan out like that.

Lord Ponticus suddenly made her marry Lapitus.

And so she had to change tactics.

She bore Petrino's child in secret but to masquerade her as it was Lapitus's, she even poisoned herself with a lighter dose of the substance to induce an premature delivery.

The dangers with that move need not be said, as she had to be very sure of the precise dosage just by eyeballing it, or there would be the chances of either a total miscarriage or the tactic not working as intended.

But the greed in her heart pushed her to do so regardless.

And even though she somehow succeeded, it still had lasting effects on her daughter.

One of the reasons Fabiyana looked a good one or two years younger than her age would dictate was due to the lasting effects of this poison.

But to Lady Felicia, ever harming her own daughter for her own gain was not out of the realm of possibility.

What a scary woman!

It was only at the very tail end of his life that Petrino truly woke up to the fact.

She had poisoned herself and had possibly staged that check up with the doctor.

In that way, whether she gave birth prematurely, on time, or even past the due date, all could be attributed to the poison.

As for how she was able to tell Lapitus she was pregnant even a month before she was one, well, Petrino had no good answer for that.

Perhaps Lady Felicia simply foresaw that Petrino would take her during the party and prudently predicted that it would be that time of her month.

Much of the above conjectures were only that, conjectures in Petrino's mind.

He was unable to confirm any of them.

But if Lapitus had not decapitated him if he had given the man time to say his piece, there was a very true possibility that many of these conjectures could have been proven true.

But because Petrino had only slightly lied about a very small detail, it rendered his entire testimony dubious in Lapitus's eyes and might have ended up costing his life.

Who knows, if Lapitus thought everything Petrino said was true, he might have even lived.

But sometimes, just as bundling up truth and lies together can be sold as the entire truth, like Lady Felicia had done with Alexander, other times it could also end up doing the complete opposite, like here.

Petrino had lied about his father because he disliked the man, and that slight mistake had let Lady Felicia inadvertently escape notice by the skin of her teeth.

What a small, yet huge blunder.

"Phew!"

However, unaware of all this missed content, Lapitus finally let out a small but relieved sigh after finishing the deed, turning to look down on the severed head with a stoic face.

And as he looked at it, instead of being disgusted by it, he was more disgusted at himself for almost believing all the filth that was coming out of its mouth.

None of what he had said was said seriously, and everything about it was promptly forgotten by Lapitus.

Though some things might have been worth truly mulling over, like how Petrino had known Lady Felicia was unlikely to be a virgin.

'Finally ...it is over!'

But Lapitus had almost blind belief over Lapitus, so instead he breathed a sigh of relief as with Petrino's death, aware that with this, the entire saga was imminently about to come to an end.

The coup had already succeeded, and all that was left to do was put the finishing touches.

Hence leaving the body there, Lapitus exited the room to rendezvous with the others, and then in the following hours, quickly managed to fully secure the whole premises.

By now, the once bustling building was eerily silent, as almost all men, women, and children had been already killed.

And once the nerve center of the city was conquered, Lapitus quickly sent scouts to Alexander's camp to alert them to the opportunity and have them be prepared to enter the city when he ordered the inner gates to be opened.

At the same time these scouts came to his camp, Alexander was still awake, actually entertaining Lady Felicia in his tent.

Over the prior five days, he had gotten to know her better, and through his interactions, though he was not sure why, Alexander had come to feel the same sort of vibe from the lady as he did with Gelene.

To him, it seemed like a bizarre thought to have since they looked nothing alike, but their manners and way of thinking seemed strangely familiar.

Plus, there was also the fact that Lady Felicia was trying to seduce him at every opportunity, boldly showing off her assets to Alexander.

Whenever she came to visit or Alexander went to her tent to learn about the political structure of Tibias, Lady Felicia made sure to have all sorts of wardrobe malfunctions, letting Alexander have all kinds of tantalizing views.

The only thing Lady Felicia had not done was greet Alexander fully nude.

But other than that, everything was fair game.

From nip slips to gazes deep into her ravine, to her creamy thighs, to even a few glimpses of her secret bushy garden, nothing was left off the table.

At one time, she even made sure that Alexander caught her breastfeeding Fabiyana, letting him see how the little girl was nibbling and suckling on her large, leaking nipple.

Something that Alexander had found very tantalizing, his throat feeling perched as he gazed at the other free one.

Alexander knew, that if he did not find a woman soon to relieve himself, he might not be able to resist lying with Lady Felicia.

"Fabiyana! Fabiyana was not drinking milk. She... she was just..."

Alexander also remembered that when the little girl was caught in that situation, unlike her mother she was very embarrassed, zapping away from her the moment she noticed Alexander's intrusion.

After all, only children drank mother milk, whereas she was an adult.

And so going beetred, Fabiyana quickly tried to think of a good excuse.

"Ummm... Mmmm" But despite doing her best, she could only stammer.

Until she was saved by the very person she was trying to convince,

"Haha, not to worry, I know Lady Fabiyana is an adult. She must have been doing it so that she can quickly grow taller!" Alexander lightly chuckled.

It seemed that her mother had not let her in on her little exhibition plan.

And at this rescue, the little girl was very glad, nodding her head strongly with sparkling eyes.

Becoming taller was something very desired, and she was glad Alexander had remembered her saying that.

While Lady Felicia carried out these acts, of course, none of the little tricks escaped Alexander's notice.

It was plain to see to anyone.

But he only chalked these up as a desperate mother and daughter trying to cozy up to him.

It was a move right out of the oldest book and Alexander simply half closed his eyes and enjoyed it. And it was amongst such circumstances that a herald came to Alexander, informing him that the Thesalie gates were going to be opening soon.

Chapter 752 Taking Thesalie (Part-1)

With all the nobles dealt with, Lapitus had little trouble getting the more neutral soldiers to his side.

These men made up the bulk of the remaining forces and once they saw that everyone else they might have relied on was already taken care of, no one saw any point in resisting.

Besides, many did not want to resist in the first place, as they were quite in favor of taking Alexander's offer and only followed Petrino out of sheer fear.

So when it was revealed what Lapitus had done, many rejoiced, with only a staunch few being enraged.

But these men were then either killed or chose to swallow their anger and accept they had lost.

So with this new reality cemented, the men guarding the gates swiftly followed Lapitus's order asking them to open it, as they at last welcomed their new lord.

Back on Alexander's side, upon receiving Lapitus's scouts, the higher ups were quickly woken up from their slumber and informed of the situation, with Alexander even personally meeting the messenger soon afterward.

And there, he was updated on a very succinct version of the event that had occurred inside the city just a few hours prior.

"Good! Lapitus has a great job. Tell him that I sent my congratulations!"

Once finished hearing, Alexander first and foremost let out his low but very happy cheer.

No matter what his thoughts on Lapitus were, he was certainly glad at what the man had managed to do for him.

Opening the gates three weeks early really would help Alexander with his subsequent annexation plans.

Once the messenger finished his report, Alexander then gave his own set of instructions.

"Go back and tell Lapitus that he is to move all the soldiers and their families inside the Lord's Mansion."

"That way they will be safe."

"Because once my army moves to the city, they will sack it for three days, only those inside the mansion will be spared!" Alexander repeated the last part to emphasize the point.

But hearing what Alexander was planning to do, made the messenger let out a cry of incredulation.

"Wha...t! But my lord you promised they would be safe if we surrender? So why?"

That was not the deal in his mind.

He thought the people would be left alone if he surrendered.

So though he did not outright say it, in his eyes, Alexander was clearly reneging on his promise.

In response to this outcry of seeming indignation, Alexander's eyes flashed a chilly cold light, as he then icily commented,

"I said it would not slaughter them all if they surrendered. Not let them go scot free."

He sounded very offended at a mere messenger questioning his integrity, adding,

"I gave you the chance to surrender five months ago. Why didn't you do so then? Why did my men have to shed blood, sweat, and tears needlessly on those walls for so long?"

Then flashing his palms, he declared,

"Since you made my men suffer, since you chose to resist, it is time you paid the price. The three days are my man's reward for all their hard work!"

Alexander's loud rant left the other side speechless.

Now, although this move sounded harsh, it should have come as a surprise to anyone.

Ancient sieges usually followed this pattern.

Either the city could obediently surrender and everyone would be mostly spared.

Either the defenders could resist the enemy and win, keeping everything.

Or the enemy could break through and make the populace pay for struggling, be it looting, plunder, or even outright massacres.

So this should not have been news to the man.

Thus it could be inferred that the only reason he was protesting was because he figured Alexander was soft and he might be able to extract more concessions.

Something which made Alexander particularly mad, hence the loud reply.

Hearing Alexander say his piece, the messenger had no reply, so he was dismissed as such,

"Go! Tell Lapitus this. Tell him that he has till morning to prepare. My men will enter the city at the crack of dawn,"

"Oh! And tell him to keep the heads of all the nobles and military he killed in a cool place. I have use for them."

Alexander added the last bit as a side note.

He needed to collect those trophies for propaganda

Following the messenger's silent departure with only a salute, Alexander then left it largely up to Melodias to organize the army and have it ready to storm the city.

So the sleeping soldiers were quickly booted awake from their slumber and told to immediately get ready and report to their unit

Something which many were initially irritated by, but hearing the war was about to end and they were imminently about to get their prize, each man followed this sudden order like their sergeant was breathing down their neck.

Hence soon, about an hour before daybreak, Alexander's forty thousand men were lined up right in front of the walls, ready and eager.

Lapitus had opened all four of the large gates, so Alexander surrounded each with ten thousand men.

'Finally, this will be over!' And as the men waited with bated breath for the promised time, they all sighed in relief, beyond glad they would not have to dig any more earth.

Some of the lucky ones standing at just the right angle even got to see the prize dangling defensively in front of them, for the houses and streets of the city were nearly visible through the open gates of the second wall.

All four of the thick, heavy oak doors there were once closed tighter than a nun's legs now laid fully ajar-devoid of any guards, making the entire thing completely deserted.

It seemed that after Alexander's instructions, these men had swiftly left their posts and fled to the safety of the mansion, leaving the city defenseless.

Thesalie was completely up for the taking.

Trumpet

And it was with the advent of the first white thread of light on the horizon that Alexander personally blew the trumpet, signaling the men to storm the city and claim their reward.

He had informed them that other than the mansion, everywhere was fair game.

And the moment Alexander's trumpet rang, it was like a dam had burst.

What moments ago were men arranged into neat little formations all broke like crumbling sand dunes, as they then maddeningly rushed towards the city.

In fact, if Meloidas had not set up which legion and even which cohorts would enter the city in which order, just this mad dash might have taken a few hundred lives.

After all, these city gates were intentionally made as small as possible, measuring only a few feet in width, in order to limit how many enemy soldiers would be able to push through if a breach occurred.

So shoulder to shoulder, these gates could at best let in four or five men at a time.

Hence the prudent decision by the careful general.

As the soldiers started to slowly flood into the city from all directions, the people there, who were only waking up for their day, suddenly found themselves right inside a living nightmare!

Lapitus and the other men neither had the time nor the will to alert the populace of the impending disaster, being only too busy saving them and their families.

So while the few thousand men and their families sought refuge inside the mansion, the rest of the city was left to fend for themselves.

For these people the sun today brought them no hope unlike every other day, but only pain and despair, as Alexander's men jumped on them like ravenous hyenas.

And following the forty thousand soldiers, many of the nearby camp followers too joined in this macabre feast.

Alexander had promised them this in exchange for their labor.

Now if Alexander could, he would rather not do this.

Because once a city was sacked, its people violated and their belongings taken by the marauding soldier, it made the subsequent ruling of the place very hard.

Alexander knew that with this order, he would be hated by the people here, and thoughts of revenge and rebellion would foment in their hearts for years to come.

But even if he wished otherwise, sometimes it was very hard to stop these atrocities even if the commanders wanted to.

Sometimes, after breaking through a city, the soldiers would scatter to all parts of the city, like now. making keeping order impossible,

And because sieges were very physiologically demanding, by the time the soldiers would win, things like military orders and discipline would go out the window and the men would have only one thing in their mind, to take the prize they were promised, be it riches or pleasure.

And it was also the same prize Alexander promised his levies.

So the sack of Thesalie had to happen.

Even if Alexander ordered against it, it would happen.

And the only way to perhaps prevent it would have been to have a full-standing professional army that had discipline drilled into them every single day.

It would not work with a levied army like Alexander was using.

So until Alexander could have a large standing army in the tens of thousands, he would have to deal with such issues.

Chapter 753 Taking Thesalie (Part-2)

The sacking of the city, as Alexander promised continued for three days.

During that time, the forty thousand Zanzan soldiers and forty thousand camp followers filled their pockets with the riches of the residents, their bellies with all the fine food the city had to offer, and their spirits with the soft flesh of the women, and even the men and children as preferred by some perverts.

And as they enjoyed this, aside from arson and burning the place down, almost every other heinous act was conducted by the invading men.

The Tibian men were beaten or killed if they resisted, the women were forcefully taken and many of their valuables were snatched.

And this occurred to the point that the surrounding air around Thesalie for those few days was filled with the mournful screams of women and children and the mad cackles of men.

The only ones who managed to evade this cruel fate were those lucky enough to find a way to escape or hide and not be discovered.

In hiding places like the sewers, the surrounding hills, or even inside the destroyed rubbles of a house.

But just how effective those places were, was really up to the individual's luck.

In this mad revelry, even many of Alexander's high ranking officers took part, including many nobles.

He would even later learn of many of them having taken part in a wild o*gy in one of the large halls of a deceased noble, the sound of flesh hitting flesh and loud and unrestrained moan emanating from there making even the surrounding soldiers blush with shame.

Given Adhanian nobles' experience in that area, it was little wonder they would choose to celebrate like this.

And they did, they additionally let out cheers like these,

"Hahaha, Thesalie. We are actually inside Thesalie. I'm actually doing this inside Thesalie."

"Finally! My dreams! My ancestors' dreams! It has come true."

"Lord Alexander! Haha, truly he is my lord, hahaha, glory to Pasha Alexander!"

Even as the nobles swung their hips and partook in these raunchy activities, even as they were there in the flesh, they still could not pull themselves out of the magical realm they were in.

Everything seemed too surreal to them.

They still could not believe they had done it!

And this feeling of incredulity would be hard to describe to an outsider, as the fall of Thesalie meant something truly special to an Adhanian to an outsider, something much more than the simple fall of a mere city.

They had been trying to get it for centuries and finally, they had done it.

The city was there.

A close approximation to what the nobles were feeling could be how the Islamic world had reacted to the fall of Constantinople at the hands of Mehmed II in Alexander's previous life.

The fall of the city at the hands of the Muslims had been prophesized by Muhammad more than eight hundred years ago.

At the time he this prediction, the Byzantine Empire was the superpower of the western world, whereas the Arabs were nothing more than a paltry group of nomadic wretches living almost uncivilized lives out in the desert.

So when they heard a man promising his group the capital of the western world, at the time it seemed like a pipe dream inside a pipe dream.

It would be almost the modern equivalent of claiming that a poor, unknown country conquering Europe, a continent at the forefront of technological innovation

Thus many pagan Arabs had openly mocked Muhammad for making such a howling at the moon prediction and for deceiving his followers.

But right after his death, the Muslim armies had managed to crush both the superpower of the west, the Byzantine Empire, as well as completely destroy the superpower of the east, the Sassanid Empire, even quickly capturing their capital, Ctesiphon.

And they did it at a speed that had to be seen to be believed.

So to the huge Muslim army, the capture of Constantinople seemed imminent.

And in order to prove their prophet right, the Muslims launched a huge naval and land invasion of the city.

But as you might well know, that failed.

As did many subsequent attempts.

Greek fire, its allies, and the formidable walls of the city all worked to keep its people safe and the Byzantine royal family alive, as Constantinople stood for centuries.

Until the age of gunpowder and the arrival of Mehmet I, that is.

So once he took the city, he was able to fulfill Muhammad's prophecy, something that sent shocks of elation reverberating throughout the Muslim world.

At last, their prophet's words were made true, and for their success, the Ottomans got to rule the Islamic World for the next five hundred years.

The fall of Thesalie invoked a similar feeling to this in the nobles.

Now, Alexander of course did not take part in any of the sacking of the city, even though a small part of him wished he did after hearing how the nobles had enjoyed themselves.

He wanted to experience that at least once in the time he was young and foolish.

After all, 'life's too short, why not enjoy it?'

But these were only stray thoughts.

Alexander would never seriously consider it.

So instead, he and around a thousand men remained in the camp, planning only to enter the city three days later once the soldiers had their fun and things calmed down.

Something the guarding men were a bit disappointed by as this would mean missing out on all the fun,

Thus Alexander had to promise them adequate compensation in some other way.

While Alexander waited the three days, he did not simply idly stay in the tent, drinking his heart out in celebrations.

Rather, he was actually quite busy, mainly writing letters detailing his victory.

The recipients of these letters ranged from his wife and family to his allies such as Pasha Farzah and Lady Inayah, to the king himself, and to even some of the more neutral nobles in the vicinity of his territory.

The reason for the last one being to show off his military prowess and pressure them into joining him.

Or at least discourage any attacks from them.

And in that endeavor, Lady Felicia had offered her help, the lady actually being quite well versed in Azhak.

During her lesson, she was seemingly taught quite a few languages.

And as they sat together and wrote these lengthy, personalized letters, she also made small talk.

Such as, "My lord, I really did not lie when I said Lapitus would wait ten days to open the gates. He told me he would. I don't know what happened!"

Regarding this case, the lady was genuinely worried.

She knew this was one tangible thing she would easily prove to Alexander, and she had failed.

'Dammit! That useless swine! The one time I choose to rely on him he fucks up like this.'

'Ugh! And I was so close to laying with him too. If I only had a few more days, I could have had him... fuck ...'

Internally, the vocabulary of curses and cusses this demure, soft looking lady was spewing towards her husband would have shocked anyone.

She really was upset at Lapitus, for had he waited a few more days, she would have been in a much better position.

And once she had finished venting on Lapitus, she then turned to Alexander.

'And this wooden block! What's up with him? I've been flashing everything I have and he still hasn't taken me?

'Is he a eunuch? Does he have a problem? I heard he has a wife and kid. So what gives?'

Alexander had proven to be a far harder catch than Lady Felicia had originally anticipated.

Originally, she thought that given Alexander's young age, she would need two, at best three days to wrap him around her fingers.

She had assumed that with the man, or more like boy being away from home for so long, and fighting a war, the lack of female companionship would soon overtake his lust upon seeing her tantalizing views and he would then assault her defenseless at night, thereupon having a taste of her delicious fruits.

And once he did this, given the experience, the illicit nature of the act, and the fact that Alexander had forcefully taken her, Lady Felicia planned to make him consider further concession.

Of course the act itself could be considered minor in front of Alexander, as he could almost do anything he wanted without facing major repercussions.

But Lady Felicia knew that nobles placed a lot of importance on their looks and so was quite confident in being able to make Alexander give out some things in return.

The extent being dependent on Lady Felicia's skills, both in bed and on the negotiating table.

'Hehehe, he is a just slave. I bet he has never tasted a real pussy,' Lady Felicia smugly claimed after knowing of Alexander's past.

But that confidence had soon been eroded by now,

Today was already the sixth day and that presumed nighttime attack was yet to come.

So currently Lady Felicia was almost at her wit's end trying to bait Alexander.

If nothing worked, she even considered attacking Alexander herself and go from there!

Chapter 754 Lapitus And Fabiyana

"My lord, I really do not what to say. Something must have happened that caused Lapitus to open the gates early!"

As Lady Felicia and Alexander sat across the table, writing letters, the lady quickly let out these words.

And by the sound of it, she sounded quite concerned, like she was afraid that Alexander would accuse her of deceiving him.

To which Alexander simply gave a light smile, and breezily pronounced, "No worries. I'm sure Lapitus had his reasons. We can ask him when we meet."

The messenger that came to Alexander did reveal the chance that was afforded to Lapitus that enabled them to carry out the move.

But he kept this insider knowledge to himself.

After all, what use did an outsider have knowing these intricacies?

Lapitus could let his wife know in his own time.

But over on the other side, this mild reaction only proved to make Lady Felicia's head hurt.

She thought Alexander was starting to distrust her.

Which then caused her eyes to flick imperceptively as she looked at Alexander with both anger and wounded pride.

Anger at him not believing, and wounded pride over the fact she was still unable to get him to bed her.

What made the latter part even worse was that it was not like the boy was not uninterested in her.

She could easily tell that the man before him was no saint.

He was very much like the lecherous men she had met dozens of times before in Thesalie, his eyes always moving towards her private parts when she displayed them, and his face turning various shades showing desire and embarrassment when she seemingly 'caught' him in the act.

But what separated him from the others was that he did not forcefully take her like all her previous experiences.

For instance, when Lady Felicia had offered her body to Petrino first, the man had leaped onto her at the first chance like a ravenous wolf, and ate her then and there, with little regard for how Lady Felicia felt about the act herself.

And in all her subsequent meetings, the pattern followed, to the point she had simply become accustomed to it.

But here, when she came to Alexander, she hit a glitch.

Here, although the man clearly desired her, and she very unequivocally permitted him, he still refused to take the bait.

Even if Lady Felicia did not want it, Alexander had the muscle to take her.

So what gives?

Lady Felicia felt like she was at her wit's end.

She had tried almost everything flashing she could think of, presented herself in the most vulnerable positions, and even scheduled everything at just the right time to set the mood and make sure that there would be no interruptions.

But nothing worked.

She had even shown off Fabiyana to him, just in case his preference swung that way.

For instance, there were multiple times when she arranged to have Alexander catch the young girl bathing in her tent, attended by her maids, her flawless porcelain nubile body, and even her tiny slit fully visible to the man.

But Alexander appeared unimpressed.

So by now, Lady Felicia was becoming desperate, feeling like ripping her hair out trying to think of a way.

A feeling she felt was especially urgent given that the gates had been already opened, meaning Alexander would be soon entering the city.

And the moment he did, it would signal her alone time with him was over.

She would have to leave the camp and return to playing that disgusting role of a faithful wife.

'Is my only option to get naked and beg him!' The lady cursed in her mind.

She did not want to do that.

Not only did that hurt her ego, but such a thing would also drastically reduce her own negotiating power.

So as they sat here writing letters, while one's heart was filled with glee at the successful campaign, the other's was filled with agony.

"What should I do with your husband, Lapitus?" As Lady Felicia quietened down, retreating to her mind to try and think of a way to effectively seduce Alexander, the man opposite her suddenly posed this, for he felt the silence stifling.

'Kill him!' And Lady Felicia's instinct was to reply this.

But she of course didn't say this out loud, only giving a platonic answer and saying it was all up to Alexander and she really did not care about her husband.

It seemed that the thoughts she had expressed to Alexander that day had not changed.

"What does my lord plan to do with him?" The lady then asked, her eyes hiding an anticipation for a bloody result.

"Hmmp... thinking." But whatever Alexander was planning, he was not in the mood for sharing.

Something that caused Lady Felicia to cuss at him again silently.

But the fact was Alexander had truly not decided what to do with Lapitus.

He had not told any of his officers or general about Lapitus's planned activities, knowing they would make a fuss.

So instead, he decided to come to a decision by himself.

And regarding that, he did think about killing the man, even thinking he could spin the whole quite favorably.

He could say that he was a traitor to Thesalie and he hated traitors, regardless of the side.

Or he could say that he was a coward who hid as the city was sacked.

Or he was an oathbreaker who killed his master

In all these instances, killing him as a scapegoat might placate the public for all the loss they suffered.

These were the merits of killing the man.

But conversely, Alexander also saw merit in keeping the man alive.

He could use him as a propaganda piece, showing off to all Tibian nobles that those who switched sides to him were treated very generously.

And currently, despite how Lady Felicia painted Lapitus, and how alleged Lapitus planned to betray and kill Alexander, Alexander was leaning towards the latter.

Because the advantages were too lucrative.

With one Lapitus as a shining example, Alexander was sure he would be able to get a dozen soon.

So, though not decided, he was in favor of letting the man live, unless he revealed major deficiencies.

It was also the reason Alexander had informed city guards to take refuge inside the mansion.

That way their families and worldly material would be safe and they would not hold a grudge against him.

Which would then make it easier for Alexander to use them to gain control of the city.

After all, the people were surely to be more receptive to familiar local faces administering them than their hated, foreign enemies.

And if any problems came up, he could also make them put on the hat!

While Alexander had these thoughts, turning to Lady Felicia, he then brought up another topic, "By the way, given your husband acts, what will happen about the deal with Fabiyana?"

"Do you still want me to take her into my home? Or do you mother daughter pair want to live your lives out in a quiet country house? Like you asked."

In the past few days, Alexander had come to spend quite a bit of time with the little girl.

And she was truly a little bundle of joy.

Sheltered and a bit naive, she was not as mature as the other ten years of her time.

But what she lacked in clever wit, she more than made up with a great smile and her bubbly personality, as whenever she met Alexander, she incessantly talked to him like a happy lark.

What she had done that day what she ate, her various previous experiences, the little girl left nothing unsaid.

Many times, she even showed Alexander things she handcrafted.

Alexander had indeed grown to be fond of her.

And she was even very cute too, inheriting her mother's good looks.

White, spotless skin, bright limpid eyes, and silky smooth hair that actually reached almost her ankles.

Alexander had rarely seen such good hair.

Seeing these also made Alexander think about what to do with her.

'Hmm! Well, she can be a good older sister for Alexandria and Philip. Maybe even their personal maid once they grow up.' He figured.

Alexander personally did not like the idea of taking Fabiyana as his concubine, due to her age.

He also thought that such a little girl should be allowed to enjoy life, and not be burdened with the intricacies of family life.

While for Lady Felicia, this question presented a dilemma.

She never really wanted to stay peacefully in a house.

That was just fluff.

And now that she was having such a hard time convincing Alexander to be with her, certainly wanted her daughter to at least stay,

"My lord... I think Fabiyana has come to quite like you. So if think..."

Alexander understood the hidden meaning.

If Fabiyana stayed with him, she would certainly get a better life.

And he had little problem with that.

Following this, the duo talked about a few more things, but nothing of substance.

And in the following three days, no matter how the lady tried, she was unable to get Alexander to take her.

So she finally decided to swallow her pride and ask for it!

Chapter 755 Zanzan, Adhan and Amenheraft

Alexander's letters of victory were received by his allies with a mix of elation and disbelief.

Back in Zanzan, which was the first to receive his news, Cambyses had let out an ear piercing scream of joy when the rider had first delivered it and then actually broke down crying.

She was that overwhelmed by it.

"Mistress! What's wrong? What happened?"

And her reaction was so extreme that Mean who was in the next room came dashing out, her face white as paper, fearing that the messenger had come to deliver the worst news- Alexander's death.

"Alex, ...*hic*... Alex won! We won!"

And it took considerable effort on Cambyses's part to calm herself down and relay the actual message to Mean, which then subsequently got an almost equal cheer from the girl.

Though Mean did not understand the exact significance of the capture as Thesalie as much as Cambyses did, the girl was always happy to hear her man had won.

"Haha, you are daddy's little star! He will be so happy when he sees you, hehe!"

She was in fact so happy that even told her infant son of his father's success, twirling him around and giggling with a grin as she did.

In response, the few months old boy too let out heavy giggles, though it was more likely due to the fun ride he was being given.

The other two girls, Gelene and Ophenia too felt being over the moon at hearing this, with the latter immediately going to offer a prayer at the Gaia shrine placed at the back courtyard of the house.

That night, in celebration of Alexander's victory, the ladies feasted like they had not done so in the last few months.

Like Alexander's family, many of the council members too got the messages of their great victory.

And though the formal celebrations would be done once Alexander returned, in the following days, many of them held small informal parties among themselves, toasting and drinking to themselves.

"That Alexander, he really is something. To think he actually did it, haha."

"Yes! He really is a monster. All those new things he invented. And now this!"

"It's good to follow a winner, hahaha,"

Alexander's victory here really affected the Adhanians in his ranks, with many of them feeling their loyalties becoming solidified.

While Zanzan received the message of victory almost the same day as Alexander's troops entered the Thesalie, the city being only 90 to 100 km away and a distance a skilled rider could easily cover in a day, it took far longer for the information to reach the capital, Adhan.

And even then the first news was sent by a messenger bird, so due to weight restrictions, it lacked much detail, only claiming that Alexander had broken through Thesalie and was getting ready to invade Tibias's heartlands.

But that was enough to set the court at the capital abuzz and for the next few days that was really the only thing anyone talked about, as every nobleman tried their best to gather more information about it, with some even cursing that Alexander did not write more details in his note.

For that they would have to wait, as the riders with Alexander's much bigger, several pages worth of letter would take at least fifteen to twenty days to cover the nearly 900 kilometer journey.

Ptolomy felt his heart surge with joy at having this god of war as his retainer or at least he liked to think Alexander was his subordinate.

"Hahaha, brat! That brat really did it. Celebrations! This calls for celebration!"

While one of the most estactic men there was of course Pasha Farzah, who really could not believe what he was reading.

When he had heard of Alexander's plans to invade Tibias and given him those mercenaries, he certainly had been expecting anything much.

His only real hope had been that Alexander did not lose too badly.

Thus when his men got him the small, rolled up note, he had to scan it a whole four times to make sure he was not reading it wrong.

Following which the big bear like man had let out such a huge roar of cheer that it had made the guards standing outside almost jump to their feet in shock.

And then in celebration, the prime minister declared the next day to be a holiday in the city.

As for Lady Inayah and the Queen Mother, well under the latter's order, the former set out for Zanzan at once, hoping to see and then report back on the situation as soon as possible.

And accompanying her was also Kayvan, Pasha Farzah's fifth son.

The man had only returned to the capital for less than a month, hoping to attend his year's Jtaama, but under his father's direction, he was made to return almost as soon as he got off the ship.

And if not for the pilgrimage, the suddenness of the victory, and the relatively dangerous water during this time, perhaps they would have been accompanied by the king himself.

After all, to take Thesalie was a dream every Adhanian king had for generations.

'Once spring comes!' So Ptolomy decided he would visit Zanzan and Thesalie once winter passed.

As for Alexander's enemies, like Amenheraft, they of course received it with shocked trepidation.

For Amenheraft, it was initially one of disbelief.

Having personally fought the Tibians and even Perseus himself, he knew just how resourceful and great fighters those people were.

And though he hated to admit it, he did not think those people were so easy to defeat.

Never mind Alexander was claiming to have taken the fortress of fortress head on.

Hence when the initial reports started to come in, Amenheraft's allies simply threw them into the rubbish bin as being the howls of a lunatic.

"Heh! Has that Jakqum finally lost his mind? Even if he wanted to lie, he could have at least made it a bit more believable!" One of the nobles cursed Alexander.

"Thesalie cannot be taken. A million men can march on it and a million of them will be repelled."
Another sagaciously prophesied.

"This might not be actually from Ptolomy, Perhaps our men have heard it wrong" While one of the over smart nobles even posed this.

But all of them eventually woke up to the facts that their scouts delivered and had to accept reality.

Thesalie was indeed in Alexander's, and by extension Ptolomy's hand.

And once Amenheraft did get confirmation, the man reportedly had closed himself in his room for the rest of the day, refusing to see anyone.

He simply could not believe it was actually true.

And perhaps more than even jealously, Amenheraft wanted to know how, how had Alexander done it.

How he was able to accomplish in a few months what his ancestors had failed to do for centuries?

The three years that Amenheraft had spent campaigning Tibias had taught him just how tough a bunch those men were.

And just how cunning their king was.

And how well their cities were defended.

Even moderately sized cities were quite well defended with large walls, never mind Thesalie.

So what happened?

How could this happen?

It would take years for Amenheraft to learn of the tactics and the new siege weapons Alexander used, ones which managed to snatch such of the effectiveness of those walls and make them vulnerable.

Although it would also be wrong not to credit any contribution of Alexander's success to Amenheraft.

For if the king had not attacked Tibias and ravaged it for three years, Alexander would have certainly faced far greater numbers and stiffer resistance.

But Tibias by now was exhausted, its manpower depleted and his treasury gone.

Finding spare young men in that country had become as rare as spotting a golden deer by now and the populace was nearing their breaking point over taxation.

All of this was largely due to Amenheraft.

So when Alexander attacked Tibias, it was kind of akin to stealing Amenheraft's kill, letting him do all the hard work, and then sniping the last shot.

When Amenheraft's archpriest Manuk heard of the win, aside from Alexander's prowess, he also came to recognize just how big a propaganda boost taking that city was.

He knew after this many of the neutral and even allied nobles might choose to switch sides.

He had to stop that!

But before that, he had to stop that Alexander.

So as the brains of Amenheraft's faction, he got to scheming.

Through secret channels, he had found out that Ptolomy had promised Alexander Tibias in exchange for his loyalty.

But now, Manuk decided to use a few in the court to try and poison Ptolomy's mind.

"Capturing Thesalie has been always our ancestors' dream. How can we let an outsider, a Thesian have it?"

Manuk knew Ptolomy very well.

And believed this would be enough to rouse the vain men.

Then a lift was surely to follow.

And as for the last notable person on Amenheraft's side, Pasha Muazz, the rotund man had broken every single vase in his house and brutally stabbed four maids, killing three of them once he learned of his most hated man's accomplishments.

Not only had he killed his son, taken his city and now he had snatched even his most precious dream.

And it was said that the howls he made and the curse he let out shouting to the heavens were enough to make even his wives and children escape from part of the mansion, retreating to a more remote corner.

Chapter 756 Tibias's Reaction to the Fall (Part-1)

Pasha Muazz's rage induced state would last almost a week, with his allies largely leaving him alone during this while.

Something that worked to make the man even angrier as he saw it as him being abandoned.

Normally, whenever he had these kinds of tirades, there would be a whole host of sycophants pleasing and placating him.

Whereas now, there was not a single one.

This vivid, visual representation of his fall from grace and the sinking realization of the scale of the loss terrified the man and he let out his insecurities the only way he knew how, through sheer unbridled rage.

The man was truly spoiled and rotten.

And the recipient of his fury was unfortunately the poor staff unlucky enough to get him as the master as well as the various materials that adorned his abode.

The death toll in his estate by the end of the week would reach half a dozen, with property losses in the tens of thousands of ropals.

As for Alexander's last group of recipients, the neutral and ambivalent nobles, their reactions were mixed, ranging from unmatched elation in some to fearful trepidation in others.

It was almost a perfect reflection of their varied allegiances.

Some reacted like Ptolomy and his court, rejoicing, "This is a sign from the gods! His Majesty is truly blessed! It is only so that the city was able to be captured under his rule."

To note, their claim very conveniently forgot about Alexander.

These kinds of people mostly included those who were already thinking of switching sides or in the midst of discussing it.

As for more neutral and hostile nobles, they were of course very fearful.

If Alexander could even break through a city like Thesalie, what chances did they and their puny cities have?

Hence soon some pleas of allegiance started to come to Zanzan, each bearing gifts and looking to swear fealty.

While another group of nobles took the completely opposite approach, signing secret treaties with their neighbors and proposing to band together and resist Alexander in the event of any aggression.

And at the same time, they sought reassurance from Amenheraft, hoping he would protect them.

But Amenheraft himself was in a dilemma.

Almost all these nobles were from Zanzan and some from Adhan, and in those territories, he lacked sufficiently powerful allies to reassure them.

Hence he gave them mixed answers, the contents largely depending on the peerage of the person asking and the strategic value of the place he controlled.

And when the nobles presented their case as a group, one which caused much headaches for Amenheraft, he tried to balance his capabilities with his promises.

So in the following months, Amenheraft's standard reply came to be this, "Rest assured, the treaty with Ptolomy is still in full effect. Your lands will be safe. And when the time comes, we will obliterate that blight from these lands. Fear not, as long as you are with us, he cannot harm you."

This on paper sounded very grand.

The treaty was only three years into its agreed six years time limit and that appeared to give Amenheraft a good amount of time to prepare his and his allies' forces.

And if it was really true, perhaps it might have actually worked to alleviate some of the worries.

But there was one tiny problem with it.

And that was 'technically', that treaty did not include Zanzan.

Alexander had refused to sign on that particular condition, claiming all of Zanzan belonged to him and that all the nobles must follow him, while Amenheraft had categorically refused to accept that statement.

And with both sides at an impasse, the entire thing was left at that, in limbo with no clear direction.

So just as Amenheraft could claim Alexander would not attack due to the treaty, Alexander could claim there was no treaty regarding these lands and he was free to annex them, setting it up as one of the flashpoints for the annulment of the treaty.

And the nobles of course were aware of this.

But when they raised these concerns, Amenheraft simply reassured them unless Alexander wanted to assume the title of an oathbreaker they would be safe and left it at that.

While the nobles, being stuck between a rock and a hard place, the majority chose to swallow the explanation and hope Alexander also thought as Amenheraft did.

After all, whether Alexander becomes an oathbreaker or not, it would not matter to them if he attacked and they all end up dead.

And it was out of that fear that a small minority, consisting of the most hawkish nobles, advocated a surprise strike right now right into Alexander's heartlands.

They saw it as being presented with the perfect opportunity, with the man absent and his army occupied elsewhere.

If they struck now, surely they could take Zanzan and cut the head of the snake.

But of course most of the men saying those were more full of hot air than taking actual action.

They lacked any sort of real authority and those that did, knew better.

The image of Perseus smashing their heads against the Zanzan walls was still vivid in many minds, and in the last two years, they certainly had learned of how Alexander had defended his city.

They understood that a solid wall of crossbowmen would be too hard to chew through.

Not only that there was also really no one close enough who could attack Alexander quickly enough to take advantage of his absence.

The only viable candidates were the Matbars (Marquisses) but each of them were hundreds of kilometers away, with their own security concerns.

Furthermore, even if they wanted to strike Alexander, given the approaching fall season with its harvest, followed by winter, it would be spring at the earliest or even summer when they could be ready.

By then Alexander might be already back in Zanzan.

A possibility made much greater by the fact that Thesalie was near the doorsteps of his capital city anyway.

Due to all these it seemed that for now, Alexander's borders were safe, leaving him free to continue his penetration of Tibias.

Aside from the Adhanians reacting as such, there was one last group that also reacted to Alexander's capture of Thesalie.

And that was the Tibians themselves.

In Tibias, among the general populace, there was not much reaction, which was normal given the time period.

Given the technology of the time, the propagation of this news to the more remote parts of the country took anywhere from six months to a year, the carriers mainly being the traveling merchants and peddlers, who passed their information from mouth to mouth.

"The city... *sigh*, to think even Thesalie would be was destroyed. What times have come!"

"The blood... the blood that been spilled there flooded the city up to my ankles. I was there! I saw it!"

"There were auctions held at the market that sold naked girls in the market. Little girls! Ye size! It was horrific!"

"Those barbarians! They are here to kill us all! All!"

"The city was left largely in fact, The Adhanians spared the people as they promised!"

"The army there did not take even a single slave captive. Everyone was set free."

"All the citizens were given free food and coin in compensation."

Interestingly every peddler seemed to have his version of the story, his version of the truth.

And what was so curious was just how wildly some of their truths varied, to the point you would think they were describing completely different events.

Then to further muddy the waters, these recounts would get further distorted when going from mouth to mouth among the common peasantry, and in a real-life example of a game of Chinese whisper.

So by the end of it, Alexander would either become a paragon saint of virtue, or the devil incarnate in the eyes of the people living in different parts of the country.

Now, though many of the tales these merchants recounted were of horrific events, be it true or false, but most of these talks among the citizenry were largely viewed as gossip and interesting stories to pass the time among friends and family in gatherings like one would banter when drinking or at the dinner table.

It was never seen as any real news that required them to act.

For these simple folks, Thesalie was a dream-like place, many, many distances away.

Perhaps even in a different dimension.

Most of these peasants were so illiterate that they did not even know what was Thesalie, never mind understanding the gravity of its loss.

Was it a kind of food? Was it a drink? Or was it a city of great strategic importance?

If anyone asked this multiple choice question to a sampled populace, the answer would likely be neatly divided into one third for each option.

The only real records of the city available to the majority of the public were mainly in the form of folktales and tavern songs, but even they only described how that king or this noble defeated the monstrous Adhanians coming to enslave them all using the grand, impregnable walls of the city.

Those songs would focus more on the king, the gods, and the nobility than the city itself.

Chapter 757 Tibias's Reaction To The Fall (Part-2)

In Tibian folklore, there were quite a few songs describing Thesalie.

Of course, they were embellished to the point the city was almost turned into one of tall, mythical tales, flaunting it to excess.

For example, in some instances, Thesalie was described as a great infallible city with walls kilometers high, literally reaching into the clouds, with them thick enough for chariot races to be held atop them and manned by a million men and a million angels.

That the soldiers there were undead, their numbers never depleting and the hills around it were treacherous and full of ghosts and spirits who would attack any invader.

It was such ridiculous claims that made the city seem more like something belonging inside a fairy tale, and the ordinary folk found it hard to relate to it.

So these kinds of overly dramatic descriptions simply failed to form any connection to the ordinary peasants and the fall of Thesalie was

As such, since the vast majority of the people did not interact with the city, why would they bother knowing about it or empathizing with its fate?

What did its fall or rise have to do with them planting grains in their field, milking their cows, feeding medicine their sick children needed, or a hundred different worries that occupied their minds at a time?

They were already busy enough, they could not care less about such a distant, ethereal thing.

So in their minds, Thesalie was too distant a dream to care and most simply brushed aside the information with the following words. 'That's the lords' concern.'

It was only the cleverer citizens, who learned a bit of writing and reading, who knew a bit more such as the city's name and a bit of its importance, though even then it was only limited to that,

But even using this limited information, these men were clever enough to sense the impending storm that might come as the loss of the city meant the gateway to their country was now wide open.

There men worried that the horrors of those three years might repeat themselves, and tried to think of a way, any way to prepare.

But found, much to their dismay, try as they might, largely powerless in the face of it.

Alexander's army was not so weak that a few clever peasants' actions could noticeably affect it.

Hence they had little recourse other than to run or brace and endure.

As for the ones that were able to do something, once the scouts really confirmed what the crown prince and Lord Theony had claimed, well to use the proverbial phrase- 'Shit truly hit the fan!'

A second round of panic, curses, and finger pointing commenced, this time the scale was perhaps even greater than the first time.

After all, initially, nothing was yet confirmed.

Hence many, even Perseus himself, had held out hope, no matter how ephemeral that Thesalie would stand.

But now that the facts were in, they knew they would have to prepare for the subsequent consequences.

Alexander was surely going to drive his army forward and capture vast swathes of their land.

And to counter this, first and foremost, what did the nobles do?

They then sought out a culprit for this failure! A scapegoat!

Yes! Such was politics.

Even when facing a dire, almost existential threat the Tibian nobles were more interested in playing the great game of the court rather than concentrating their efforts on trying to stop Alexander.

Were they stupid?

Perhaps.

But not necessarily so.

Because at times like this it was, this type of infighting and power struggle was common.

And it was even not as if this type of thing was only rooted to this time period.

It persisted even through modern times.

The best example would be how during World War two, even when the Allies were about to close in on Berlin from both sides, the German planners still had the time to argue and engage in interdepartmental rivalry.

The army, the SS, the volunteer corps, the various local political wings, all sought to try and snatch power from one and another, even though the power they sought had already become diminutive, the Reich by that point already having turned into a husk of its former self.

Never mind all of them were about to be indiscriminately crushed by either army anyway.

But even then the human nature of politicians could not change- the ever present desire for the accumulation of ever greater power.

And in that endeavor, to root out incompetence before the showdown with Alexander, the court decided to first and foremost carry out a cleaning up.

In particular, Mithriditus's faction sought to lay the blame for the loss of Thesalie on Lord Theony, claiming he did not properly support Lord Ponticus during the battle outside the city, resulting in his death,

Initially, they had been very envious of Lord Theony getting that honor, but now that things turned out like this, they were more than happy to pick on him.

They claimed that in the battle Lord Theony failed to show adequate generalship and also accused him of leaving the city prematurely and neglecting the duty given by the king.

They argued that after the loss outside the city, he should have stayed behind to organize the wall defenders and mount a solid defense.

To emphasize this point they pointed to Petrino, Lord Ponticus's son, who had stayed behind and 'fought' till the death of him and his family.

The man was put on a pedestal of excellence and cloaked in a garb of magnificence, forming a perfect contrast with the man who had chosen to abandon the city and run like a coward with tails tucked behind his tail.

This was a blatant violation of Perseus's direct command and they claimed Lord Theony should be punished.

All of this of course was horseshit.

Everyone very clearly knew what had happened back there, but the leader of the city, Lord Ponticus was a royal, a highly decorated military veteran, and perhaps most importantly a martyr.

The loss of the city could not be put on him.

It would be too scandalous.

And unfortunately, the next high level noble after Lord Ponticus that was present in Thesalie was Lord Theony.

So the man unluckily got his wastewater dumped on him through little fault of his,

It also did not help that Mithriditus's brother was married to one of Lord Ponticus's daughters.

And through him, the woman urged Mithriditus to punish the man for her death's death.

While Perseus and Philips simply closed their eyes at this dirty move and let it play out.

Since Lord Theony had been lost someone had to be held responsible to placate the nobles and Lord Theony happened to be the scapegoat, being at the wrong place at the wrong time.

The noble lord did try to argue his case, saying there was no way to hold the city after losing 40,000 men.

But the court decided to pin the blame on him regardless.

He was of course not executed, that would have been too extreme.

But he was dismissed, or given an undetermined time of leave from court to spend more time with his family as they put it.

Only after taking care of this did the nobles start their discussion regarding Alexander and they largely came to the same solution- sue for peace with Alexander at almost any cost, while at the same time trying to raise as big an army as possible to replenish their numbers.

The latter endeavor was to be headed by Mithriditus, and though the man enjoyed the power that came with it, it also caused him to bear a lot of the pressure.

"Mithriditus! How fast can you do it?"

Once Mithriditus was nominated, this was the first question he was asked, and almost every noble had turned to place their sight on the older man, the combined gazes being so intense that even this veteran of the court felt a bit overwhelmed.

Mithriditus could tell that these impatient men wanted an army standing outside the city yesterday if possible.

'What am I, a magician?' He lampooned.

The difficulties in achieving this should be known to them all.

"Spring." He gave a single word of reassurance, something which the court silently nodded to.

Mithriditus wanted to say the more realistic 'closer to summer', but refrained from knowing the impatient bunch.

"We should also try to gain support from abroad. What about Thesos? Or even the Kaiser family?"

And Tibias's efforts to save itself were not only restricted to its interior.

Like any other country with foreign diplomatic access, they quickly dispatched emissaries requesting aid from its various allied city states, as well as that ducal family from Sybarsis.

While lastly, they chose to try and negotiate with Alexander, and the envoy for that was surprisingly chosen to be Lord Theony.

No, Lord Theony was not chosen, he asked to be given the chance.

"It was my fault that we lost Thesalie. Let me go and try to mitigate this."

The man seemed to have at last surrendered to the court's rhetoric and urged the king to give him this chance to redeem himself.

And Perseus knowing how the man had been played, relented.

Though he missed the crafty glint in the nobleman's eyes.

Chapter 758 Lady Felica's Offer

As the third day of the city being sacked passed and night dawned, Alexander started to prepare to personally enter the city the next day.

This thought put Alexander in a very good mood as he very much looked forward to entering that dream city at dawn.

But as he was finishing up the last of his reports late at night, and getting ready to slip into the warm bed,

"My lord, are you awake?" This mellifluous voice sounded from outside his tent

And hearing the woman's voice, Alexander grumbled, 'What is it now? Couldn't she wait any longer?'

Given the things Lady Felicia had been doing around him for the past few days, it did not take a genius to why she was here.

She had become particularly desperate in the last two days, practically, and sometimes literally spreading her legs for him, to the point Alexander knew if he showed the slightest intention of taking her, the lady would be more than willing.

So her being here really could be for one thing.

"Come in my lady. It is very cold outside."

Alexander did think of shooing the woman away, not liking the thought of entertaining someone trying so hard to get inside his pants.

He did not like sleeping with such women who obviously wanted something in return.

But ultimately felt like hearing her out.

"Thank you, my lord. I hope I'm not interrupting," Lady Felicia entered politely with a heavy, hooded cloak draped around her, only her face visible to the world.

The nights here even in early August tended to get a bit chilly.

"How may I help? It's quite late isn't it?" At Lady Felicia's genteel greeting, Alexander's reply sounded hurried and even impatient, and he did not offer her a seat or even initiate any pleasantries.

If it was not clear even before, now Alexander made it crystal clear he did not like being disturbed like this, especially at this hour.

But Lady Felicia, to this only produced a light, unconcerned smile, not all seeming offended.

"My lord, are you planning to enter the city tomorrow?"

As if she could not read the atmosphere, she then innocently posed this with a charming smile.

"Yes," Alexander gave the curt reply with only a small nod.

This was open knowledge, Alexander saw no need to waste any breath here.

And he wondered why she was here wasting both their times like this.

It was then that suddenly Lady Felicia's voice turned soft and sultry, her eyes turning soft and armous, "Then I guess this will be our last night together... *rustle*, My lord."

As the woman said this, she very deftly let go of the cloak, letting it pool to the ankles and revealing what was underneath.

And it was very surprising.

Surprising enough to make Alexander's eyes bulge as he clearly saw what Lady Felicia wanted to show.

Despite it being night and the absence of any strong light source, Alexander always made sure to light his tent as bright as possible, using as many candles and oil laps as possible, up to almost four to five times the average amount.

He did this because he had to stay up a lot of the nights to read and write reports and the soft glow of candles wreaked havoc on one's eyes when straining oneself like that.

So Alexander did this under as bright as light as possible since he did not want to end up with eye problems by his forties.

And now, a convenient side effect of that practice was how he was able to explicitly discern the magnificent sight presented to him.

Now the lady was not nude under her cloak.

Lady Felicia could never be so crude and that alone it would not have made Alexander much moved.

Instead, knowing how to seduce men, she had very thoughtfully chosen her 'armor' or perhaps more appropriately 'weapon' for the battle.

And it was certainly a very potent panoply, the sensual dress certainly catching Alexander's eye.

It was a lacy, one piece sheer negligee with beautiful flowery patterns decorating it. in sexy black with alluring frills around the breasts and waists.

The fabric was opaque in around some parts and enticingly translucent around others, namely the fleshy breasts, sides, and the navel.

There were small shiny diamonds studded around to make the wearer sparkle, and pairing the dress was a pair of matching black stockings covering the thick, creamy thighs.

But these decorations played simply second fiddle to what the main attraction of the dress was.

The slits!

Yes, the negligee had strategically cut slits into the, three of them, clearly showing off the two brown buds on the chest, which had already become turgid, and the patchy, dark garden underneath.

It was a crotchless negligee, revealing all that was meant to be hidden while hiding most things that did not mind being revealed.

And seeing Lady Felicia in this state, Alexander would have to give to her, she had a killer body, and the clothes did not make her, but simply accentuated what was already there.

For a brief moment, he even felt a bit jealous of Lapetus for having this bombshell of a wife.

And had to resist that small part of him that wanted to go grab those luscious melons and have a suckle out of those thick buds full of milk, or squeeze those luscious fleshy mounds on her flanks, or simply thrust into her hot garden and take her then and there.

The bright light made it easy to that she was ready, for to further add to her charm, it seemed Lady Felicia had very naughtily shaved herself down there so that only the hair around her pink lips was cleared, but not around her pubes.

This worked to clearly highlight the parts she wanted Alxx to gaze at and this signal worked.

And Alxx found that place to be unnaturally sparkly, with occasionally a twinkle of light dropping down from there.

Very apparently LF was very wet and ready.

But as Alxx gazed at the ready and hungry women, who wanted nothing more to be taken, instead, seeing the dress, it suddenly made Alexander produce a slight chuckle inside him.

Because it suddenly reminded him that this dress was most likely designed by him!

Or to be more specific, about a year ago, he had shown Gelene this new design of a lingerie to sell, both because he wanted to see his wives in such a thing, and also as a way to placate the woman who had been trouble getting pregnant.

And following that, a few months later she had come to him with large smiles, happy telling him how popular the new design was with the upper class ladies and how she had gotten a special order to make a custom piece a very special noblewoman worth a few thousand ropals,

Alxx did not bother to ask how that woman was, it didn't matter to him, but he did help a bit in designing the thing.

And well who would have guessed he would find it here of all places?

'Not only does she have expensive taste, but she also has good taste,' Alexander then half joked seeing his creation fit so perfectly on its target.

Then once having enjoyed the eye candy to his fullest, Alexander replied to this open invitation with a light smirk, and this,

"My lady, it is quite chilly here. I suggest you put on something heavy so that you do not catch cold."

Lady Felicia was humiliated!

In her mind, she had shed all her honor and dignity and came to Alexander dressed like this, like a whore, and was spreading her legs so blatantly.

Yet, he refused to lay with her!

If Alexander had preferred men, she might have understood.

But he was clearly heterosexual.

And he clearly was attracted to her.

So rejecting even this open advance made her feel both ashamed and incensed, her glassy, soft eyes turning hard and cold.

"Did I do something to offend you, my lord?"

But Lady Felicia still did not give up.

Even when Alexander was playing the fool and clearly rejecting her, the lady still tried, as she turned to face still in that pose, pulling a hurt, forlorn face.

By now she had given up on getting anything out of Alexander using seduction.

And hoped to eke something out due to pity.

Seeing this, and feeling he might have been too harsh, Alexander stepped a bit quickly towards her, his voice by now a bit apologetic, "No, no, my lady, why would you think that? You have been nothing but of the utmost help to me in the last few days. I am very grateful for all the information you have imparted to me in the last few days."

Then at this point, Alexander's voice turned a bit hesitant,

"It's just that I do not think it would be prudent to do such a thing you mother in law. Fabiyana would surely be hurt if she knew. I'm sorry." Alexander's voice then turned strong and reassuring,

"And besides, you can rest assured. Whatever happens with your husband, I will take good care of you and your daughter. You do not have to worry. Food, housing, and security, I will see to it all."

Alexander till now believed that the reason Lady Felicia was trying to get into his pants was because she was insecure.

After all, in this time period, a widow living alone with her daughter was a very dangerous prospect.

Chapter 759 Safety Concerns

In this day and age, a widow living alone in a city with her daughter was a very dangerous prospect.

Especially if it was someone as beautiful as Lady Felicia.

If she was left all alone in the city without any protection, Alexander was sure that thugs and gangs come knocking at her door within days of her moving in, allured by her beauty, as they would visit at various times of the day, wanting to 'chat' and 'check up' on how she was doing and if they could do anything to 'help'.

And they would not even bother to hide the innuendo behind those words.

Facing them, without a strong man, Lady Felicia would find it very hard to get rid of these pests.

As for asking for help, well the most obvious one- calling the guards, would almost never be of any help.

They cared little for these minor inconveniences, and would mostly only act when a crime has actually been committed.

In their eyes, the distress of a widow would not be even seen as trivial.

And sometimes, telling the guards would bring fresh trouble, as the next day, being made aware of the sweet treat available, the widow might find herself being visited by an additional man- the guard!

And compared to the thugs, he would be a much more terrifying foe to deal with.

As for the alternate route, asking the neighbors for assistance, well they would almost never be of any help.

In fact, the widow might consider herself lucky if all they did was act as simple innocent bystanders.

Because most of the time, the neighbors would hate widows, especially beautiful ones.

And it would mostly be due to simple jealousy.

A widow minding her own business might suddenly get a visit from the housewife next door, but instead of coming bearing gifts, the housewife would almost always come to curse her in unspeakable tongues, saying that her husband stole a few glances at her during the day or worse she was trying to seduce him.

At other times, 'helpful' neighbors might pretend to be friendly and introduce her to their male relatives or even themselves.

And refusing them would simply call for more harassment.

From simple things like occupying the front of the door, to loudly singing lewd songs about her, to even stalking her all day and night for days, even weeks on end.

Some would even get physical, throwing rocks at the windows, dumping their trash in front of the house or even bullying her children.

If the widow still did not budge after all of this and continued to resist them, well the man would finally lose his patience, and wait for the chance that would inevitably present itself.

The window would then be attacked.

Following that, even if guards then chose to apprehend the culprit given a crime had been committed, well the damage would have been already done.

And besides, with this one gone, the next one in line would gladly step in to try his luck.

But perhaps none of this would happen.

Perhaps the widow would face something much worse- being targeted by the gangs!

And if a widow was to face them, most of the time her fate would be sealed.

They would force her into prostitution if she was beautiful enough, where she would be made to entertain who knows how many men, both as customers and the numerous men in the gang.

Or if she was really beautiful, she would be sold into slavery.

Most of those gangs had deep connections with many slave traders after all.

And at that point, her fate would be to be brought by some nobleman as a sex slave, where her fate would be unknown.

If she ended up at the hands of someone like Pasha Muazz, where she might be hunted down as a human animal for other's sport, to say her fate would be tragic would be an understatement,

Whereas if she ended up at the hands of someone of a neutral or good natured master, she would be able to make ends meet without too much bullying.

But by that point, she would have almost no control over her own destiny.

So to survive in a place like that, one either needed a strong man in the house or if one was a single woman, needed to be big and strong, and tough as a nail, in order to make it clear that one wouldn't back down even if it cost you your life.

Lady Felicia could not do that.

She might be a great seducer, but she was no fighter.

And besides, given her beauty, no amount of fighting prowess might have been enough to deter them, unless she could wield flying swords like those in cultivation novels.

So in Alexander's mind, he could see why she would want to sleep with him and try and obtain more security.

If he was in her shoes, he might have done something similar.

But though such events were common in other cities, Zanzan was an exception.

And the reason had to do with how Alexander came to know about these harassments in the first place.

Alexander knew about these things from two sources.

One was from Mean, who had iterated that her mother was killed by a such a man accidentally when her father was gone from the house for a few months as he was levied to a fight.

It was also because of that experience that she was so spicy and testy, never showing any weakness in her day to day, fearful that she would suffer the same fate as her mother did if she did.

The second source was from Cambyses, who would inform Alexander of such happenings in Zanzan itself.

There were a lot of widows living in Zanzan, courtesy of the war, and Cambyses's officers would almost regularly report being notified of this kind of harassment.

And though they would try to help as much as they could, the efficacy would be limited.

At first, Alexander would order the guards to try and stop this.

But the policemen could only keep an eye on so many women and only for so long.

The city guards neither had the numbers nor the twenty four surveillance capability.

So the hooligans could simply scuttle back into their snake hole when the patrols came and emerge once the danger passed, going about their business as usual.

So that kind of report continued to fill Cambyses's desk and unable to find a proper solution, she then urged Alexander for a solution.

But even Alexander found it hard to solve, causing the man to rant a bit,

'Who said people in the ancient times were more straightforward? All I have met are scoundrels and scums.'

Here Alexander was referring to how people in his previous life used to look back nostalgically at the 'good old times' with rose tinted glasses, saying how everything was better back then.

'Back in my day....' was perhaps their most favorite phrase.

But Alexander, being actually transported to the 'back old days' found just how 'good' and 'old' everything was.

Not only did the lack of technology suck, the people were far from the 'straightforward' nature his elders used to tell him about.

In fact, he personally found many of the people here to be crude and rough.

Compared to that, the one and a half decade of compulsory education in modern times had transformed society into a much more mellow, mannered, and civilized one, one where people, even if artificial, at least pretend to care and help.

But here, most people could 'fuck all' about you

Life was rough and so were the people living it.

Now, of course, there were good natured people.

But most of them lived in villages and rural areas.

The phrase 'honest, hardworking farmers' was still mostly true, though it was doubtful that would be said as a compliment, for it was perhaps why they were trampled on the most, by nobles, by the clergy, and even the hooligans.

But for those living in the cities, Alexander found their wit and cleverness not to be any less cunning than the various scammers and swindlers of modern times.

So dealing with them proved quite challenging for him.

Until finally, losing all his patience at the incessant reports which demanded his attention, Alexander decided to do something brutal.

He at first ordered Cambyses to have the police identify all the hooligans suspected of committing these acts, and then two months later, he led a full scale crackdown on all of them, utilizing the entire police force and even some of the army, arresting almost everyone in one go.

And once every street rat was picked off the streets, came the brutal part.

Alexander had at random every tenth one executed!

A 10% execution rate.

Yes, it was the same punishment as the Roman decimation.

It was a very cruel order.

But its efficacy could not be doubted.

Because once the remaining ones were told why this was done, these scoundrels suddenly had their spines straightened.

And Cambyses had not received a single such report till then.

A result which made Alexander feel that perhaps the strict laws many of the Asian and Middle Eastern countries had were the reason why they were so safe, compared to Western countries which usually handed out much lighter sentences for the same crime.

Perhaps the mere existence of these harsh laws, with one or two living examples, repelled a hundred would be criminal from committing any crime.

Chapter 760 Doubting The 'Truth' (Part-1)

Alexander sought to reassure Lady Felicia over what he thought were security concerns, as he believed the woman was either scared of living alone or her husband's retaliation when she did plan to leave him.

But Alexander easily had the power to protect her in both cases.

In the case of the former, it was an easy solution.

While for the latter, Alexander could simply ask Lapitus that he wished to have Lady Felicia as one of his wife's handmaidens.

Or simply have the pair to run away from home and take asylum under him in Zanzan.

Even that simple move would make it very hard for Lapitus to find the duo in a city of two hundred thousand.

But Lady Felicia herself did not care for those, her goals being much loftier.

So listening to Alexander seemed to make herself increasingly frustrated.

According to her planned schedule, this should have been the point that Alexander took her to bed without any questions and the rest would unfold from there.

But the very first roadblock, the challenge of seducing Alexander to take her appeared to be too challenging for her.

She did not think simply honey potting Alexander, a twenty year old brat would have been so hard.

In her mind that was supposed to be the easy part!

When she had formulated her plans, she had focused her attention on what to do after she had laid with him, thinking the first part was already set in stone.

But now when Alexander had called her 'mother in law', she mostly knew this game was lost, for the word emitted a kind of taboo that was not to be violated.

And hearing it she had felt a sudden urge to stab the guy, the connotation making her feel old.

"Does my lord not find me attractive?" And then trying for the very last time, the lady finally posed this, sensually biting down on her lips to show how 'hurt' she was.

If the man still did not invite her, then Lady Felicia might truly be out of ideas.

But like predicted, Alexander simply smiled and requested, "It is getting late my lady. And we have a big day tomorrow. Get some rest."

Alexander was not the type of cuddle any and every woman who came to him.

Alexander believed he had addressed the reasons Lady Felicia had come here dressed like that and that was that.

He would not entertain her more than that.

Besides he believed that during wars, one should be distracted by these pleasures.

And he meant to follow his beliefs.

Though he did feel a twinge of regret at not being able to savor such a delicious body being offered so defenselessly in front of him.

Especially those milky jugs.

But hey, you win some, you lose some.

Whereas in the opposite camp, Lady Felicia upon hearing this felt like her sky was crashing down.

If she left Alexander's tent now, if morning came and their relationship still remained in its current form, if she could not leave Alexander with even a single memory of a hot, steamy night, she knew all her plans and schemes were likely to vanish like smoke.

Forget about ruling Thesalie, Alexander might not even remember her other than that she was the mother of one of his numerous mistresses or worse maids.

While after reuniting with her husband in the morning. she would go back to her usual life.

No, it would not even be her usual life, it would be far worse,.

For without her father Lord Ponticus or her lover Petrino to finance her expensive lifestyle, the consequences could be imagined.

Lady Felicia did not want to even think about how she was going to lead her life from that point.

'Why? What mistake did I do?' As she thought about these, the woman found herself asking, even doubting her own body she was proud of.

And then suddenly!

After almost drowning in this whirlpool of her confusion, suddenly Lady Felicia's eyes seemed to extricate herself, turning from muddy and clouded to sharp and clouded.

It seemed that she had made a decision.

All of a sudden her face then hardened, losing all those soft, alluring features, while her tone became sharp, as she stepped towards Alexander in that outfit, boldly posing,

"Before I go my lord, may I ask who do you plan on leaving to govern your city? Will it be you, a nobleman, or perhaps a Tibian?"

This complete shift to a totally unrelated topic caught Alexander a bit off guard, as until then, Lady Felicia had not shown any kind of interest in any of this.

'What does it have to do with her what he did with the city?' So he asked himself.

And he really wanted to say the exact thing out aloud, but in the spirit of keeping things civil and polite abstained.

Instead, he gave an answer that was not an answer, only replying, "Perhaps."

By now, like his counterpart, his eyes had turned very sharp and penetrating, clearly showing he did not like being questioned like this.

But facing such a gaze, Lady Felicia actually seemed unfazed, at this time point clenching her teeth and quickly saying in a single breath,

"Then would you consider me ruling the city in your stead! I know the place and the people. And they will certainly be more receptive to a Tibian like me rather than an outsider like you my lord."

Finally, she revealed it, her true intentions, being forced to divulge them.

Lady Felicia had said these words in possibly record time, so quickly in fact that for the first few moments, Alexander doubted his ears, thinking he must have missed something.

But once the initial shock wore off, and his mind processed that Lady Felicia was indeed asking what he thought she was asking, a quiet but blazing fire rose in his heart.

To think that after all he had gone through to have the city, a nobody like her would ask to snatch it from him like that.

She was not even a part of his faction.

'Who is she to decide who I give the rule of the city to? How dare she ask this!' So Alexander was both angry and incredulous at the absurd demand.

After spending the last few days with her, Alexander found the lady to be quite smart in his interactions.

And that was what made the whole thing all the more incongruous.

So for a while Alexander did not know to respond, laugh out loud like he had heard one of the world's funniest jokes, immediately kick her out of his tent in that state, or simply lambast her for even having the gall to suggest such a thing.

And at last he settled on this response, his voice mocking and taunting,

"Is that why you were trying so hard to sleep with me? To become my mistress? Did you think you could get it if I thought you were a good fuck?"

"..." Lady Felicia did not immediately answer, her eyes only fearlessly meeting Alexander's enlarged and angry pair.

At the end of her ropes and seeing no other way, she had decided on this crude direct approach and simply asked Alexander what she wanted.

And the reaction was what she had expected.

If she was in Alexander's position, she might have reacted the same, or even worse.

And that was why she originally wanted to worm into Alexander's pants first and then slowly cajole it out of him.

But since that option was out, she knew she had to face Alexander's naked hostilities head on when she asked him, so she then replied in a prophetic tone,

"The dislike the people of Thesalie have towards foreigners, especially Adhanians is truly profound. My lord, even if you can conquer Thesalie, you will find it very hard to rule the city effectively. Rebellions, riots or just subtle sabotage might continue for years, stoked further by forces from the capital. All this will make holding the city a constant headache for you."

"But if you let a native rule, a Tibian born and raised in the city, even if it is only a puppet position, all these problems can be largely mitigated." At this point, Lady Felicia's voice had turned soft and enticing,

"And who better can you find than me, the daughter of the previous city lord?"

"I can help you rule the city without any problems my lord!"

Lady Felicia softly whispered next to Alexander's ears as she finished by promising,

"....." Alexander did not immediately say yes or no.

He was moved by some of the points raised, like the inevitable resistance the city would have to his rule and Lady Felicia being the best viable candidate to try and minimize it.

With Lord Ponticus's entire family gone, and all his male successors killed, Lady Felicia was the closest living relative the people had who was still living in the city.

So putting a puppet like her on the throne was also a time tested technique, with perhaps the best example being how the British were able to control a quarter of the world using this.

So its efficacy could never be questioned.

But he was also skeptical about some of the other things.