

## Herald 891

### Chapter 891 The Beginning Of The End Of Tibias

The large earthen pile impacted Perseus's face directly with the force of a missile strike, smashing his nose through the helmet, knocking his teeth out, and most iconically, shattering itself into thousands of pieces and peppering his face and eyes with deadly earthen shards, embedding themselves deep into the flesh and almost blinding the poor man.

"Aghhh!" Perseus had rarely experienced that much pain and it even made the strong man reel in horror, screaming in a voice few had heard him utter.

"\*Neiggggghh\*"

At Perseus's utterance of this guttural scream, the steed down below, hearing his master's pained cry, also buckled in fright and confusion, kicking its legs up in the air and trouncing around as it looked for a way to bolt.

This intense jerking motion needless to say did not have any positive effects on the king, who was already struggling to stay atop his horse due to the pain as well as just the sheer momentum of the projectile, which had been large enough to almost knock him back in on itself.

And so unfortunately, this sudden, large buckling was enough to make the man let go of the grip of his reins and lose his balance, as the king tumbled, falling off his horse backward and right onto the stone paved streets underneath.

And as he plummeted, a distinct stench of death began to fill the royal man's nostrils and his life seemed to flash before him.

'Ah! Is this how I die? Is this my end? Defeated? My country, my people, my family... all lost of the invader?' Perseus initially felt intense and bitter regret at his seemingly determined outcome, his heart screaming with a vengeance.

It would be a heart wrenching experience for any man to have grown up with everything one could possibly want and then die with nothing.

'Oh... but maybe this is not so bad. I will get to see Leosydas soon. Ahhh I missed Leosydas so much!'

However, in the next moment, Perseus seemed to suddenly come to terms with his fate, as flashes of that particular man's face surfaced into his mind, filling him with fond memories.

Perseus always felt like he had two partners in life.

One on hand was Lady Parthia- his dutiful, loving wife, his sanctuary, and where he could always seek comfort.

And on the other hand Leosydas was kind of like his naughty mistress.

Whereas the noble lady was always chaste, dutiful, and very demure in her lifestyle, being the perfect queen for Perseus and the ideal Tibian woman for all the women in the country to emulate, as well as being very conservative in bed, Leosydas was perhaps the exact opposite, always willing to pleasure his king.

And Perseus liked the two of them exactly for their distinct roles, with him definitely having much more memorable times in bed with Leosydas than his wife.

Hence these past almost three years without Leosydas had been tortuous for the king, as if felt like half of his soul had been ripped away.

He longed to meet the man again.

'Come Perseus! Come to me!' And as if the Leosydas in his mind could read his thoughts, just as Perseus wished to spend more time with him, he then suddenly heard the face speak, in that ever recognizable manly, musky voice which tugged at Perseus's heart.

'Come Perseus! We can once again ride without worry... just like we used to.' That voice again beckoned, now holding his hand out from atop a horse with a smile, on a sprawling green field that seemed boundless.

And these words quickly brought up in Perseus the vicissitudes of how the two of them spent their time in their teenage years with nary a worry in the world.

"Perseus, here!"

"Father, we are here!"

And then soon Perseus found that Leosydas was not standing alone, there was Mithriditus as well as the two princes.

And while his two sons looked just like how before they died, Mithriditus was no longer the old man everyone knew.

He looked much younger, with jet black hair and a full beard, wearing a magnificent, tight fitting armor that seemed to portray him like a heroic general right out of a painting.

Here was a man in his prime, full of life and energy, just like how Perseus remembered seeing him in his youth.

And with the three new additions came three fresh memories, such as how Mithriditus had taught Perseus the art of statecraft when he was the crown prince, and how Perseus had held and played with the two princes in their childhood.

"Perseus! What about me?" However, just as Perseus resigned himself to death, letting himself drown in the depths of this ocean of fond memories, suddenly this low, deep, very wizened voice rang out right beside his ears.

It was a voice so familiar that Perseus suspected he would remember even if he reincarnated in his next life.

For it belonged to his father.

Now, Perseus's relationship with his father was never harmonious, due to various reasons.

The old man had not approved of his relationship with either Leosydas or Lady Parthia, he did not like Perseus personally taking part in risky battles, and most of all, he did not like his son's off hand approach to the rule of the kingdom, where he delegated much of the day to day tasks of administration to Leosydas, Mithriditus, and Lord Theony, for the old man saw this was as an erosion of the royal family's power.

And perhaps he was right in that last part, as one of the three, Lord Theony had indeed betrayed them.

But that was not why he was here.

Perseus knew his presence was far more significant than that light admonishment that would have garnered him. lights

Perseus understood his father had come here to subconsciously represent the people, or more accurately the powers he had failed.

And this made the king's relieved resignation to death change to one that of dread and sorrow,

'\*Sigh\* I'm sorry Royal father. I'm sorry ancestral spirits... I'm sorry I failed you. I have failed in the sacred duty entrusted to me by all of you. I do not have the face to ask for your forgiveness. I do not deserve it. I only fear what will happen to all your legacy.'

And with all that done, and being short on time as his head was about to just hit the ground, Perseus's mind conjured up the last two people he cared for most in the world, who were still alive, as he muttered only two words, "Parthia. Phillips."

Perseus would have loved to see his beloved wife one last time and he frantically wished his proudest son could escape the battlefield today unscathed.

And that was it.

It would be this wish that would be the last thing Perseus would remember as he hit the ground, the intense impact of the fall as he the injury from the pile impact instantly knocking the man unconscious.

"Your Majesty! Quickly get His Majesty!"

But what was fortunate for Perseus was that he had fallen from his horse backward, meaning his body ended up close to his lines.

And with the person Perseus was attacking- that boy, also lying prone, it meant that by an absolute miracle, there was no one around the vicinity to finish the job.

Perseus had somehow survived this deadly encounter, as his limp body was hastily dragged to the rear lines by his bodyguards, who had jumped into the fray like fearless lions to retrieve it.

Of course, Grahtos's men too had noticed the man in shiny armor falling off his horse and tried their best to capitalize on that.

But although they were rewarded with the heads of two royal guards, the main quarry escaped.

"Dammit." And seeing so Grahtos clicked his tongue.

Although it was more of a slight vexation than actual regret.

For given the rate at which he was scything through the enemy, Grahtos was sure even if Perseus could escape death in this very instance, it would only be a matter of time he was forced to make that 'saving throw' once again.

And besides, even if Perseus had lived, it was not like Grahtos could not lie and pretend that he was dead.

It was with this crafty thought the experienced general cleverly shouted,

"That's it, men! You did it! Their king is dead! Look! His horse is empty!"

"Now attack the rest and send them to see him."

This loud statement was directed not as much as towards his men, as it was towards the enemy, which was why Grahtos specifically mentioned the horse.

Being Perseus's personal steed, this beast was of course very distinct, being large, tall, and gaudily decorated to attract attention.

Which also made it very easy to see now that there was no one on it.

"The king!"

"His Majesty!"

"No! How can this be?"

"Wuhhhhuuuu. So this is the end?"

And seeing this, seeing that their last bulwark had fallen, the already faltering men's morale collapsed, with many even breaking down in tears.

"No! The king is alive!"

"Fight! Help is just around the corner. Hold on a bit more."

"Do not panic. The enemy is lying."

Whilst seeing this although the royal bodyguards tried to rally the men, although against the great proof in front of the soldiers, their words rang hollow.

#### Chapter 892 The End Of Tibias

The news of Perseus's 'death' spread like wildfire among the ranks, his empty horse standing like a flaming beacon of testament to that claim.

And seeing that, the melting pot that was already the streets of Kalimat started to finally boil, as panic and desertion set in with its full effect.

The men threw away their weapons and armor to try and find a way to run as fast as they could, which they of course failed to do spectacularly.

The narrow terrain constricted their movement like an anaconda straggling its prey and many died due to the actions of their own men, as they pushed others into harm's way to save their own.

While their lack of weapons made them like defenseless sheep in front of Grahtos's men, who found the lines had devolved into a squishy hodgepodge that any army could only dream of encountering.

To the legionaries, it appeared like every swing of the blades would reap a new life, making many of the men who were farmers feel like they had been taken back to their fields, where they were cutting wheat.

By this point, that part of the fight could no longer be called a battlefield.

In fact it could no longer be even called a fight.

More like a slaughterhouse, with the animals being unfortunately replaced by humans.

"What! Father is dead? How?"

However for Philips, the ongoing near complete obliteration of a part of his army was far less precedent than the report of the death of his father.

As soon as the news reached his ears, he suddenly felt faint, as his vision blurred and his head swirled a bit.

'Finished! Everything is finished!' The man's worst fear had seemingly come true as he agonizingly then howled in his heart, for he knew perhaps better than anyone else what this meant.

Although Perseus was no great administrator of the lands, he was still considered a great ruler, being very charismatic and seen as a titan in the hearts of the people.

His presence alone inspired the men around him, and it could be said the only reason they had been able to keep fighting for as long as they did was purely due to him.

So Philips was not wrong to judge the loss to be irreplaceable for them.

And with his father's supposed death, Philips judged his country to be also lost.

Tibias could be said to be a country that was originally held up by five pillars.

And these pillars were, in order of descending importance, Perseus, Leosydas, Mithriditus, Philips, and Lord Theony.

Currently, out of the five, three were dead and one had defected, leaving Philips all alone to try and pick up the pieces.

A task that would have been a mammoth undertaking even in peace times, where he only would have had to deal with internal rebellions.

Whereas now that a foreign power was literally a day's march away from him.

Philips could only see darkness in front of him.

"....."

The scout that had delivered the news of the king's demise saw his prince go completely silent after his initial outburst, like a computer that had suffered a sudden glitch and froze.

"... Order the surrender." And then suddenly unfreezing himself, Philips in a woody, mechanical voice abruptly commanded this.

With his father dead, and the large losses they suffered today, there was no way Philips would be able to continue the fight, even if he had the charisma and prestige of his old man.

Thus he saw no point in continuing this pointless struggle, feeling that if he waved the white flag now, even ended up in the gallows, perhaps he could at least save some of his men's lives.

"Wha...? Shouldn't we escape Your Highness?" But it seemed the scout had other thoughts, as he looked at Philips with an incredulous face.

This man here was one of the most zealous proponents of the school of fighting on till the death, and so at his prince's, or perhaps in his eyes now the king's order of such a thing almost seemed like a betrayal.

"Go! Do as..."

And sensing this, Philips turned his head with a fierce expression on his face, furious at being questioned and wanted to heavily rebuke the man, when suddenly another herald came racing towards them, pointing towards Philips's rear and shouting in a voice full of panic and despair,

"Your Highness! Grave news! There is an army approaching us from the rear! Look!"

As if Perseus's death was not bad enough for Philips, right when the Crown Prince was at his most vulnerable, Alexander decided to make his appearance, heading straight for the main gate of the city.

He had finally managed to cover the long journey, and as he approached his target, the forward scouts he had sent forward came with the current position of the bulk of the enemy's force.lights

And being unable to endure the lure of hitting an unsuspecting enemy on the flanks, Alexander drove his men quickly towards it.

"Hurry men! Our brothers need us. Look the enemy is besieging them!" The officers urged the legionaries.

And as the men quickly marched, they at last came into Philips's view, who felt like he was seeing a moving sea of blue carpeting the lush greenery underneath, rising out of the horizon like some kind of summoned swarm,

"....."

Seeing this Philips simply froze.

As did whatever little will to fight he might have had left over.

Then in some small schadenfreude way, the man began to feel happy to see Alexander, as he felt like he was being put out of his misery.

No longer would he have to continue this long and grueling but mostly pointless fight, nor would he look too cowardly for surrendering.

It was the best ending he could think of given the circumstances.

And it was the same case for many of the men, including that zealous scout behind him.

Seeing Alexander's huge 20,000 men army right on their doorstep, pressing against their back, while they faced the city walls, with nowhere to go, it snapped their fighting will in half and they knew the game was lost.

Philip did not even have to give the order to surrender.

Most men did so voluntarily, raising their spears high up into the sky which symbolized the holstering of the white flag.

While Alexander was more than happy to accept a win without bloodshed.

"Send the orders. No company (100 men team) is to engage the enemy in fighting unless they are attacked first."

"If anyone disobeys it, he will be court martialed and executed!"

Alexander had bled enough for this campaign and did not want to lose a single more man and feared some of the more glory seeking men would disobey him for credit.

The legionaries soon formed a semi circular arch around the phalangites, surrounding them, before starting to separate and dismantle the army unit by unit.

"Throw down your weapons. Everything you have. And then lie down."

Came the orders, and the regular grunts quickly followed, lying down on the muddy ground that had been churned up the steps of tens of thousands of men and beasts, with their hands above their heads.

Alexander and company had not brought enough ropes with them to take all these men prisoners at the same time, so after the surrender, fast riders were sent out to Alexander's base camp asking for it, while at the same time, about 10,000 phalangites were unarmed and set on a march towards the camp, escorted by a legion of 5,000 men.

Given Alexander's size of the camp, that was the maximum number of prisoners he could handle without being overwhelmed.

As for the rest, well they were made to lie in that wet ground the whole time, while Alexander tried to make arrangements for them outside the city, as he tasked some of his men to build pens to 'herd' these men in.

The engineers thus got to work cutting down nearby trees to make a very rudimentary fence, asking the men to spend the night under the open sky.

The only people who were given an exception to this treatment were the 3,000 Thesians who had stealthily defected to Alexander prior.

These men had not accompanied Perseus into the city for merriments, though some of them were part of the overzealous who had rushed into the city, although most with the intention to kill Perseus, not save him.

So when the time for surrender came, the leader of the group introduced himself and got a pardon from Alexander, being allowed to rest inside the city.

And this was the same treatment that Philips and the other captured nobles received, while Perseus, who was still breathing, was given Alexander's personal physicals to try and close the man's wound and save him.

Alexander wanted to have him as the main attraction when he did his triumph.

*\*Trmupet\*, \*Trumpet\**

And as the day came to an end, it was this ceremonial trumpet that rang out from Alexander camps, reverberating throughout the surroundings, its sound appearing especially melancholic to the losing side, for they knew that sound not only signified the end of the battle, but also the end of Tibias a country.

Alexander had won and Perseus had lost.

#### Chapter 893 Next Few Days (Part-1)

The cleanup following the surrendering of the army took a few days to complete, as Alexander's men worked hard to process these men- identifying and classifying them.

The officers and regular grunts were separated from each other as per the standard procedure, with the former being recognized by proofs such as a seal or badge or simply distinctive, more decorative armor.

This was done because the officers and various nobles were of higher status and thus deserved greater comfort as per the customs of the war of the time, while the regular grunts were asked to discard their weapons and lie down on the ground, then forced to spend a few nights outside the city under the clear open sky.

It was hence very fortunate for the men that it was the middle of summer and the nights actually cool and comfortable to sleep under.

As for the officers, once they were recognized they were escorted to reside in some of the larger houses inside the city, being effectively put under house arrest with guards stationed at all the exits.

It should also be pointed out that his generous treatment was not sorely done out of the goodness of the heart, but to separate these grassroots leaders from their squads.

It was reasoned that this way even if the surrendering soldiers wanted to rebel, they would have no voice to lead.

And lastly, the very top echelons of the army, i.e.- Perseus and his one surviving brother, for the other had died on the frontlines protecting his father during Grahtos's attack, as well as the unconscious Perseus was taken to the city lord's mansion, where Alexander and company too had set up their abode.

There the two men were kept in locked rooms, while the injured and unconscious Perseus was attended by the best physicians Zanzan had to offer, as Alexander tried to make up with the best way to deal with them.

"My lord! They should be immediately killed! One mountain cannot have two tigers! As long as they live, they will always pose a threat to you. Please act quickly!"

And solidly in the 'kill the royal family, cremate them and then scatter their ashes to the winds' faction was of course exactly who you would expect -Lord Theony, as he tried to convince Alexander to act that very instant to carry out the massacre.

In fact, the man did not even like the idea of Alexander taking these three men prisoners, wishing he had killed them as soon as they had surrendered.

So the fact that not only had Alexander given them quite good accommodations, but was even treating the injured king, made the man very frustrated.

'\*Snort\*'! You mean they will always pose a threat to you.' While hearing Lord Theony's forceful urging, Alexander only retorted this in his mind, rolling his eyes disdainfully.

The ulterior motive behind Lord Theony requests was as plain as the day for anyone with half a brain to see.

Lord Theony knew that if Alexander chose to keep the royal family alive, he would always have an alternative to him when it came to the administration of Tibias.

This to the man was of course unacceptable.

And it was a sentiment that Alexander could detect from a mile away.

And it was also not like he could not understand it

If Alexander was in the man's position, he would have perhaps done the same.

Heck, it could even be said that he had already done something similar with Ptolomy.

But it was also because Alexander had done so that he knew just how dangerous it would be for him to allow that to happen.

If Lord Theony was even as half as ambitious as Alexander, he might rebel just like Alexander was biding his time with Ptolomy.

It would be an action that although would greatly benefit him, would be disastrous for Ptolomy.

And Alexander certainly did not want to see his roles get reversed.

Lord Theony had betrayed the liege he had served for decades for him, so what was to stop the man from rebelling if things ever got tough once again?

Or even if the situation never became so dire, perhaps the ever present embers of ambition would one day burst one day into full fledged flames inside the man as seeking an opportune moment, he might simply decide to call himself the king of Tibias.

Lord Theony might think, 'Since I'm already running the day to day tasks of the place, why not take the job 'full time?'

And such a thing might even garner support from the surrounding nobles, as they could develop more fealty towards their fellow countryman whom they saw and interacted with every day than some foreigner living hundreds of kilometers away.

Given enough time, Lord Theony might be able to even cultivate a loyal group of nobles under him to help assist in the endeavor and with enough support from the grassroots, and with a catchy slogan, like 'The glorious liberation of Tibias from the evil occupiers', there certainly existed a distinct possibility for creating lots of headache for Alexander.

Of course to be fair, such thoughts invading Alexander's mind were only far distant, distinct possibilities.

Given the thrashing Tibias had endured under Amenheraft and then Alexander, they would not be able to rebel for at least a decade or perhaps even a few decades.lights

So Alexander kept the thought to the back of his mind but did not fret over it too much for now.

Instead, with a reassuring smile, he gently replied, "Lord Theony, do not worry. The royal family will never be able to wield any true power ever again. I promise you that."

Although just how much of that promise Alexander was willing to stand by remained to be seen.

Alexander had lots of thought on how to proceed about this but he was not sure which to choose.

After all, there were many examples in history where the conquered royal family was allowed to live on.

But before going to such heavy topics, after dismissing Lord Theony with this on the very day the Tibian had surrendered, for the next few days, Alexander and company only had their thoughts on the celebrations, where the men ate, drank, and cheered to their heart's content, toasting to it seemed almost anything and everything

Alexander could hear the men regale tales of their war stories, such as what challenges they had faced,

"When we saw that huge army heading towards us on that ridge, we thought we were goners."

"Yeah. I thought so too when those elephants had charged at our flanks. Those are some fearsome beasts I tell you. I'm glad I survived that. I hope I never have to see them again."

Or how they had felt, with one noble slightly ruefully commenting, "Man, those Tibians fought like something else in that last battle. Shame they were defeated in such a way."

Although he was quickly rebuked by the man next to him, "Heh! You only want to fight because you haven't had enough glory."

Or how they felt currently, "Ahhh! I never thought Tibians could be taken in my lifetime. Hahaha, blessed. I'm truly blessed!"

This particular statement was made by Jamider (Earl) Yuusiq, whose face had gone all ruddy with all the drinks he had.

The man seemed happy enough to die with a smile on his face.

And lastly, there were people discussing what they were going to do after this.

"With so much new land and so much loot... Ahhh! What are you going to do with it?' One nobleman asked, knowing with the new plots of land Alexander was to give them, surely their taxes would increase.

He looked very much forward to it, as he turned to his colleague to answer his own question, "I'm going to build a new mansion. My current one is too shabby."

This was not the first time Alexander heard nobles complain about how inadequate their mansions were.

Although that still did not fail to amaze him.

He felt like he was among those billionaires who compared who had the larger yacht, in a petty dick measuring contest.

And knowing these people were his subordinates, inside Alexander felt quite smug.

Although he also could not help but lampoon a bit as even as their boss, he did not have a mansion, as he technically lived in a bungalow.

'Maybe I should build one.' Alexander even mused, thinking it was a matter of prestige.

The grandeur of this party could be said to be a bit lacking when compared to the scale that would have been expected from such a huge accomplishment.

But that was because the only supplies they had access to came from their army rations since the city of Kalamat had already used up their stock of precious ingredients to entertain Perseus.

So they had to make do with what they had.

But despite the lower quality of the items present, the mood in the place did not seem to dampen even an iota, as buoyed by the sheer scale of their feat the men knew this was just the first of surely many celebrations to come.

So they drank and cheered the mammoth undertaking they had just managed to complete, and it lasted quite a few days.

Chapter 894 Papando's Reward

The first round of drinking and feasting subsided quickly, mostly because Alexander and company found the drinks and items a bit lacking, and the entertainment, i.e.- beautiful girls and even boys for some, to sleep with was almost nonexistent.

The lack of entertainment was of course because Kalimat as a city was quite tiny to begin with.

And after the battle, its sparse population became even more scattered.

At the same time, most of the 'delectable treats' that might have been available for the victors had already been ruined by the mercenaries who had tried to sack the city the night prior.

Thus the chronic shortage of a good lay.

And it was to the point top that even the top dog Alexander had to go to sleep on a cold bed.

Now, it had been arranged for Alexander to have a maid from the mansion to warm his bed, but he found the woman not up to his standard.

There was also the fact that she was married, being the wife of a city guard, and from the way she behaved, although she did not explicitly say it, Alexander suspected that she might have been sent here against her will under duress.

This did not at all sit well with Alexander and thus he dismissed her with the excuse that he was feeling quite tired and drunk.

Although that actually worked against her, as given the huge demand for her kind services, the free woman was naturally not allowed to return home, but given that her time slot had just opened up, she was made to serve not only one man as she would have with Alexander, but multiple men, many times at the same time.

While her liberator also did not have too much of a good time, as Alexander quickly came to regret that decision when he felt his lower half throbbing and pressing against his breeches up laying in his bed, feeling quite uncomfortable as the little brother sought release and revelry in celebration for his accomplishments.

Alexander had recently come to realize that during campaigns all his lust and sexual needs would suddenly disappear completely, making him hyper focused on the task at hand.

But when it ended, that desire for physical gratification would return with a vengeance.

Hence, although he did not show, for the next few days Alexander had to try really hard to keep it in his pants.

As for the query of why he did not rub himself one out if he was so desperate, well that was simple- because it was a matter of pride.

Every time his empty hands tried to reach for his spear and pleasure himself, Alexander heard his own haughty voice ring inside him, - 'What are you doing! You are the Pasha of Zanzan, and the conqueror of Tibias, a country that had defied the superpower Adhania for millennia.'

'How can your pride allow you to do such a thing? This is only a thing that a lonely teenager all alone in his bedroom would do!'

'Do you think you lack bitches? One snap of your finger and you will have a line ready of open their legs that stretched from this side of the city to the other!'

It was because of such 'admonishment' that Alexander refused the older maid, instead choosing to endure the pain until he found someone up to his standard.

Which helped no one, as Alexander's nights were still 'cramped' and he even contemplated,

'Maybe I should bring one of the girls next time I go on campaign like the other nobles do.'

This thought came upon recalling that many of the higher ranking men under him brought their concubines and wives with them to ease the discomfort of the travel.

But the thing that made Alexander reluctant to do so was one- military discipline, where there was no place for such frivolous acts.

And two- because many times the nobles there wanted to taste flesh that did not exactly belong to them, so they would swap.

In fact, he knew of many nobles who would be very willing to go to war just because they knew would have the opportunity to sleep with a variety of women, all of very high standards.

To the men practicing this, it sounded like a great deal, as they could experience many women, with just one or two of their own.

To Alexander, however, this was an impossible practice.

And he feared that if he brought his own, he would be expected to follow suit or be disliked, even ostracized by them.

Thus Alexander was forced to remove that thought and make a note that although he allowed this for now, it would sooner or later be slowly abolished.

Since the celebrations ended quickly, Alexander decided not to dally in the city for much longer.

The true celebrations could wait until they returned to Zanzan, or at least the conquered capital of Parthenight.

There was also the fact that although they might have won the war, there was still quite a lot of work to be done in the aftermath.

Such as the juicy event of carving up Tibias among themselves.

Many nobles drolled just at the thought.

So they only stayed in the small city of Kalimat for a few days, preparing their provisions and working out the return route in the meantime.

And it was on one of those days whilst all this was going on that Alexander also finally got to know the reason behind Papando's betrayal.

When asked about it, the man frankly confessed,

"Great Pasha, you must think lowly of me for betraying my family. But you only need to ask the people of the city what kind of tyrant my father was to get the answer."

"I had long wished to rid him of us, but that...." The man suddenly trailed off as if he was stuck between whether to badmouth his father or to tell the truth.

He decided to only produce a silent pause, before finishing by saying, "It is my and this city's great fortune that you came here when you did my lord. Surely you are our liberator."

The man would later enlighten Alexander about the various crimes of the city lord, making the man truly benefit of the title tyrant.

This noble would severely punish people for the slightest slight, such as once killing off the entire fourteen generations of his stablemaster after he was caught stealing food, regularly beating and abusing both people and the slaves, picking up any women that caught his fancy from the streets, driving many businesses destitute because they offered better prices than his own poorly ran enterprise, and many other crimes too numerous to list.

The man might have been not as deviant as someone like Pasha Muazz, but still very deplorable.

And for his crimes, Alexander had wanted to originally try and hang the man in the marketplace publicly, as compensation for his crimes.

But when he proposed his thoughts to the accompanying nobles, it was instantly and vehemently opposed by all, particularly the Tibian nobles with Papando himself included.

The reasons why the nobles opposed it was because the mere thought that one of them would be tried and treated like a common criminal mortified them.

If that could happen to one of them, if one of them could be humiliated like that, what was stopping it from one day happening to them?

They all shuddered at the thought.

And furthermore felt their hearts palpate when they realized such a thing could destroy the all powerful, almighty public image they held in the public's heart.

After all, if someone as powerful as the city lord was shown to be so corrupt so openly, well it could cause rebellious thoughts to sprout in the people.

Thus many of the nobles petitioned,

"My lord, certainly the Lord of Kalimat might have overstepped his bounds, but surely he does not deserve such humiliation!" posing as if the nobleman's actions were not too grievous.

It was truly a showcase of the very low standard of moral values of the time.

While the nobles wanted to prevent such a thing due to their own selfish reasons, for Papando, seeing his father be humiliated also did not sit well for him.

Hence he cleverly reasoned, "My lord, if my father's crimes are exposed, the people might not respect me by association. So please reconsider."

Alexander was impressed upon hearing this.

He also liked the fact there was a man who did not become corrupted despite his father's machinations.

It seemed in this case, the apple had truly fallen far from the tree.

Thus given that both these sides wanted the man quietly gone, if not released outright, as some of the nobles hinted towards, Alex settled for only making the man silently disappear.

According to official statements, the people were told that the previous city lord had died during the fight with Grahtos, while in reality the man was taken to the mansion's underground dungeon and unceremoniously executed.

Then the son Papando was naturally chosen as the new governor of the city, as well as receiving a gold reward of 100,000 ropals, for, as Alexander put in, 'Aiding the people of the city in resisting the tyrant.'

Chapter 895 The Fate Of Mercenaries

Alexander had made sure to very publicly reward Papando for his efforts, claiming he was a hero for bringing the war to a much faster conclusion than anyone could have hoped for and thus alleviating the pain of the common masses.

This worked as a great propaganda piece, as Alexander showed that he took good care of the people who defected to him, enticing others to follow suit.

Papando was the main event Alexander spent his time in Kalimat dealing with.

Following this came the processing of the prisoners of war.

This mainly included the identification of the various captured nobles, as well as the mercenary leaders, and deciding their fate, i.e.- ransom, enslavement, or death.

As for the fate of the regular grunts, i.e.- peasants forcibly drafted into Perseus's army, Alexander wanted to forcibly displace them to the lands around Zanzan, to populate the place that had been ravaged by war and drought.

And that was what they were currently discussing.

Although not right at this moment, as the fate of another faction was deemed far more important.

"I wish to enslave all the Kaiser family and remnants of the Petricuno mercenaries and turn them into hard manual laborers for life. What do you think my lords?" In the meeting discussion, Alexander first posed so to the surrounding nobles.

"But my lord, would it not be better to recruit them?" And one of the nobles instantly posed the obvious alternative,

On which he was immediately supported by another who added nodding in a clear voice,

"I too think it would be a great waste for these skilled men to be employed in such menial tasks. Anyone can till the land or dig rocks. But it takes decades to make a good warrior."

"Yes! And they are mercenaries. They will fight for whoever gives them coin. Lord Pasha should reconsider." Implored another one, his voice strong and urging.

"That's right. It's not like we are short on gold either. Even with just the booty we have collected in this campaign, we can afford to keep them for years if not decades." This one chimed eagerly, with a tinge of anticipation, as he felt the addition of these men would be a great boost to their army.

"Mmmm! And they are good men, Solid. I know. I have fought them." And lastly, this nobleman from back, who was usually very taciturn and spoke few words gave his own two cents.

And this last person's addition was quite important, as this succinct man spoke rarely, also meaning when he did, his words carried a lot of weight.

From all these replies it could be clearly seen that the entire room was against Alexander's proposal and wanted to add the men to their battle ranks.

"No!" But in one of the rare instances of Alexander going completely against the tide of popular opinion, he categorically and unequivocally rejected this, unilaterally saying, "Many of the men are too loyal to that family from Sybarsis. While the Petricuno mercenaries came here solely to destroy me. Because they were jealous of my accomplishments. I cannot trust them. And neither should you, my lords."

"They will work as slaves in my workshops, I have great need for them. That's it."

Alexander flung his arms dismissively as he said this, leaving no room for any debate on this.

And thus, given his strong insistence, all the nobles could do little more than nod and obey.

Their lord had spoken, so they could only be rueful in their hearts at the missed opportunity.

Now there was of course a reason behind Alexander's madness.

He was not actually going to enslave those men.

It was all a clever ruse.

In reality, Alexander wanted the roundabout 5,000 mercenaries, around a legion's worth, to secretly exist inside his capital city, disguising themselves as workers in the workshops.

Alexander's real intention was to keep them in the reserves as a kind of trump card in the defense of something completely unexpected- like a sneak attack on the city while he was away on another campaign.

Alexander had been thinking about setting up something like this for quite some time.

In fact, he had been thinking about it right after when Perseus had attacked Zanzan while he was away in Adhan.

That had been a true wake up call.

But it was only now he was given the opportunity to complete it.

And it could not have come at a better time, as Alexander was sure his unimaginable success at Tibias was sure to ruffle some feathers in Adhania, and he was simply not talking about his enemies.

Even many of his allies might grow weary of his unprecedented rapid rise.

So with such a hidden card on him, Alexander felt the number of moves he could make on the chessboard had opened up significantly, as various crafty thoughts began to swirl inside him.

Other than their most obvious use- i.e.- in the defense of the city in the event of an attack,

Alexander also found other uses.

For instance, he could pretend to leave Zanzan- his capital, his gem, the place where his family resided, his most precious part of his land apparently defenseless as he left to campaign somewhere else, thus leaving the bait out for various snakes and schemers to try and take advantage off.

Alexander hoped that perhaps sensing such an opportunity, those men with rebellious thoughts hidden deep within their hearts, who would not usually act out of fear of Alexander's retaliation, would be enticed to take advantage of Alexander's most vulnerable state and stab him in the back.

Alexander would love to see the faces of those men when they came face to face with 5,000 battle hardened men.

And although 5,000 men might not sound like a lot, the quality of these men was sure to make up for that.

And besides, the number 5,000 only seemed small when compared to the huge large scale battles that Alexander had up until now fought against.

In absolute terms, a contingent of 5,000 men was truly huge.

To give some context of how powerful such a unit truly was, even the Roman Empire in its heyday posted only 1 legion to guard modern day Egypt, and that place was known as the breadbasket of the empire, feeding people all across the country.

So it could be seen even such a vital place only required 1 legion to quell any dissent.

And in a similar vein, another single legion was used to guard the lands making up the entirety of modern day Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and parts of Morocco.

Can you imagine only 10,000 soldiers defending a boundary of more than 3,500 km?

It would be unthinkable nowadays.

But it could be done back then.

And given that the legion would safeguard such a huge territory, the one leading it, its commander, well his influence and power could easily be imagined.

Such a leader would wield enormous respect throughout the empire, able to even directly converse with the emperor.

So 5,000 men were really a lot of men, a huge force, and most of the time, to quell rebellions, the Romans would send only chunks of it, such as 1,000 or 2,000 men.

Of course it had to be also remembered that these units would almost always be accompanied by auxiliaries, i.e.- allies and non Romans drafted from the surrounding lands.

And it was also remembering this that Alexander felt he could also use these men in other ways too.

Such as- he could make his enemies think that he had taken all this army elsewhere, leaving him with no further offensive potential, only to surprise them with a second army, sending the 5,000 men on a sneak flanking attack, like on the enemy's home city, his supply lines, or another ally he might be waiting to meet up with.

Alexander could even have these 5,000 mercenaries produce another whole army, by placing them as the core and then augmenting them with raised levies to make up the required numbers, letting the veterans act as officers and leaders.

That would indeed be a pretty effective army.

Thus, Alexander found that if he properly hid these men, he could use these men both in defense and offense.

The possibilities were truly endless.

And lastly, the reason for hiring these mercenaries for his personal use was due to the concern for his safety.

Employing foreign troops as bodyguards was a time tested tradition for kings and other high ranking nobles, with perhaps the most famous example being the Swiss guards.

This was done because if you are a king, and your troops are from your lands, well then they might want you to do something that's beneficial for them.

And conversely, they might not like something that adversely affects them.

Even if it benefits the country on the whole,

Thus, wary of this, many kings would wisely decide to employ foreign powers with no connection to the lands to protect them.

These men would serve a fixed term and be paid in gold, and in return be expected to shut up and do their job regardless of what the king did to his subjects.

It was an arrangement that worked very well for centuries.

Chapter 896 The Fate Of Mercenaries (Part-2)

In ancient times, the royal guards of a king were usually chosen from the military, men who had proven themselves to be among the best of the best in battle.

But although they were considered the most elite units of the empire, tasked with protecting the most valuable asset of the empire- the king, most of the time they ended up doing nothing.

Which was perfectly normal.

After all, they usually resided inside the capital of the empire, which was at all times protected by a huge army.

So it would have been instead very alarming if the emperor residing in his own palace had to face constant danger.

Thus these valuable units contributed little to the actual defense of the country.

Instead, as they were sat still and indulged in their vices, it led to their atrophy, such as the rise of decay and corruption through greed.

After all, if they were protecting the king, it could also mean they could stop protecting the king, meaning many times these guards held great leverage over the ruler of the lands.

And perhaps there was no better example of this than the Roman Praetorian guard from Alexander's previous life, who perfectly epitomized all the flaws there were with having one's own troops protect the king into a blend of perfect storm.

The number of emperors this esteemed unit of soldiers killed reached close to a staggering double digits and there was one time they even sold the throne to the highest bidder, like it was some common item at an auction house, giving power to the man who promised them the highest salary.

And they did get their wish in that particular instance, as the new emperor promised them a salary that was double their current one.

It could be even said that much of the troubles that followed the Roman empire in its later years were in no small part due to these units, as they contributed to the instability of the empire by frequently removing emperors.

And such a thing was apparent in Alexander's current timeline too.

During the previous Adhanian coup where the former king was disposed, it could only happen because Pasha Farzah and the Queen mother were able to convince the captain of the royal guards to betray his liege after the late king had killed the man's daughter during one of his bouts of insanity.

That man was a noble too and after knowing this Alexander thought that having a noble protect his king was quite paradoxical.

For the current power dynamic was such that the royal family and the nobility would always be at each other's throats, fighting to suppress one another.

The royal family would try to keep a tight lease control over its lords, while the nobility wanted to be their own kings in their fief.

It was an eternal struggle.

And given Alexander's conquest of Tibias, he intended to make his captain of the bodyguards Hemicus a noble too.

Now in all honesty, Alexander was not concerned about Hemicus betraying him.

The man was not that type- he was strictly a military man who did what he was told and nothing more or nothing less.

But he saw the employment of the mercenaries as a matter of tradition, a way of starting something for his progeny to follow down the line.

Thus Alexander planned to slowly replace his royal bodyguards with these mercenaries over the span of the next decade or two, leaving only a core of perhaps 50 of his closest men to himself, and replacing the other 450 men with these hired men.

At least that was only the current plan, and it might very well change in the future due to circumstances.

After all like any plan, it was not this did not have its flaws.

The biggest flaw was of course the most obvious- mercenaries were known to betray their employers, especially if they were not paid on time.

And even if Alexander was swimming in gold, who could say decades down the line?

So in that case, it would be far better to have a group of men dedicated and loyal to help one wade through thick and thin.

Then there was the simple act of the enemy paying these men more to betray his employer.

And lastly, if these men were the only ones protecting you, well then they could become the exact problem you tried to avoid in the first place.

Machiavelli wrote 'The Prince' for a reason after all.

All these were indeed within Alexander's consideration.

Also, at the end of the day, it had to be known that there was no perfect answer to this predicament, as even the Ottoman Janissaries, who were composed of Christian orphans taken from other territories and converted to Islam and then restricted from trading or marriage to curb their power before retirement got corrupted due to various reasons and posed a serious challenge for the Sultan's rule during the empire's later years.lights

The idea of taking young orphans and making them swear fealty to the king from an early age, as well as restricting them from riches and families sounded like a great way to make loyal soldiers on paper.

But as history showed even that had failed.

So Alexander came to the conclusion that keeping a group of mercenaries was much simpler to understand and control than nobles and soldiers who lived on his lands, reasoning that the latter of these men would be affected by Alexander's policies, and even if it was something that was helpful for his country on a whole, it might be detrimental to that selected group's privilege, resulting in dissatisfaction.

As for the related problems with employing mercenaries, well Alexander intended to slowly solve them as he proceeded with his policies, dealing with them when they came up and trying to figure out the best numerical balance between mercenaries, and a core of very loyal men.

It was with much intention that Alexander had approached the Kaiser mercenaries offering them 100 ropals a month, with food and lodging included for them and their family.

"Forget the Kaiser family and swear your oath to me. I started my life as a mercenary too and I know exactly what you all want." Alexander had enticed, promising, "No longer will you have to travel from village to village, from city to city like a vagabond, and fight for scraps. You can have a fixed home and guaranteed food."

"All you will have to do is renounce your previous employer and swear fealty to me!

"Do so and I will even make you a citizen of Zanzan once you have served me loyally for 25 years!"

The ultimate allure of citizenship was too much for any of the mercenaries to resist.

Being able to obtain it was perhaps the ultimate goal of all mercenaries since citizens could enjoy various privileges that others drooled at.

These included legal protections, the ability to hold public administrative offices, own and pass on property, have tax exemptions on certain things, have access to state welfare systems like special rations given to the poor, and many more.

Thus when Alexander had made the offer, the one to get on his knees the fastest was the very leader of the mercenary group, taking an oath right then and there, and loudly claiming in almost a zealous voice,

"We were yours the moment you captured us, my lord. The contract with our previous employer is already null and void."

"Please give us any command and we will complete it even if we have to walk through fire."

Many of Petricuno's remaining men also decided to follow Alexander, especially since many of the officers were quite familiar with Alexander and other military leaders.

It was also from them that Alexander got to know the true reason they were here.

And coming knowing about Petricuno's true thoughts, Alexander was honestly a bit hurt.

Sure the man and him had small disagreements from time to time, but Alexander had thought these were only trivial pebbles along the road.

Nothing to think even twice about.

But it would seem that he was the only one thinking like so.

Truly envy was a green eyed beast.

'To think I even mourned that man,' Thus Alexander half lampooned, half cursed, while also reminding himself that his success would likely mean Petricuno was no exception, but perhaps an example.

Alexander's success with the two mercenary groups also prompted him to try the same with the Thesian contingent sent by the various city states.

But predictably, almost all unequivocally rejected him, since the allure of citizenship had no effect on these free people.

Most of the men already enjoyed a well enough life in their respective cities with friends and families residing there too.

Alexander had also expected this, so he did not insist too hard.

Also as a note, the reason the Kaiser and Petricuno mercenaries did not raise any concern about their own families was because they were already here with them.

The men had brought them to the campaign!

This was because they had expected to stay in Tibias and protect the king for a few years and rather than be away from their family for so long, they decided to bring them along.

All of which ended up working quite well for Alexander.

Chapter 897 Wrapping Things Up In Kalimat

Coming back to the meeting where Alexander was discussing the fate of the prisoners of war, once the fate of the mercenaries was decided, Alexander then moved on to decide the fate of the peasants- the forced levies.

And here also Alexander had his way.

It was concluded that the roundabout 10,000 captured would be forcefully displaced along with their families.

And this surprisingly produced very little objection from the nobles.

This was because, One- these men were peasants, so who cared?

And two because none of these were their men, i.e.- the subjects of the men in the room.

Perseus had recruited these men mostly from the southern part of the country and there was no noble from that part of the country representing themselves in this meeting.

They were busy being locked up in the mansion under house arrest.

Thus Alexander was able to push his agenda through relatively easily, before quickly going to the nitty gritty logistics of the whole thing.

This took a bit of time, but ultimately he ended up appointing Lord Theony in charge of the whole event, leaving him with a legion to help him properly carry out the job.

These armed men would be tasked with tallying the locations of all the families of the prisoners, collecting them from the various cities, and then safely delivering them to Zanzan.

And it was due to the last two things, i.e.- collecting them from lands that might belong to nobles, and then safely delivering them, i.e.- making sure they did not run into bandits or slave traders that Alexander decided to keep such a large force behind.

To deter any miscreants.

With this done, Alexander then lastly came to the discussion regarding the captured nobles.

"My lord, they should be ransomed and freed. Just like the normal rules of war." And when asked about their opinion, the strongest opinion was this, mostly coming from the Tibian nobles.

With one voice stating this, another also chimed, "Yes. I too agree my lord. They did nothing wrong. They only responded to their king's order."

Followed by a third one, "Mmm. I know many of the men there. They are diligent and honorable people who only follow their oath. I'm sure they will do the same for you too my lord."

This voice tried to show Alexander there was value in sparing them.

However, Alexander was skeptical about all their claim.

Thus he frankly revealed in a curt voice, "I do not think so. I have personally seen these men fight and they fought like tigers. Particularly at the battle of Lilybee."

"They are more than just oathbound. They are fanatics. They follow Perseus out of respect and their own desire. Not because they bent the knee and swore some empty words."

"They will not follow me!"

Alexander clenched his fist and swung it slightly as he finished, his eyes fixed and steely.

"....." And hearing the words and seeing his countenance, the others had little to counter.

Even if Alexander was wrong about his assessment, the surrounding lords understood the young man had made up his mind, and understanding what Alexander might be hinting at, many's face fell.

Until a brave man tentatively asked to try and confirm if Alexander was really thinking what they thought he was thinking.

"Then what do you propose my lord?" The man made the innocuous query with shifty eyes, as he was afraid to hear the confirmation of their guess, i.e.- executing the nobles.

For killing nobles was a big no no in both Tibias and Adhania.

So all the nobles prayed that their new boss did not panache for such macabre affairs.

Or they might have problems.

"....." It was now Alexander's turn to produce a silent pause, as he momentarily refrained from answering, only producing a loo of limpid eyes.

"Let's shelve the matter for another time. We can discuss it again when we get to the capital," Until he proposed so, which drew a heavy breath of relief from the nobles, as they were reassured they were not dealing with a power hungry crazy lord.

While Alexander ignored these men and started to make his thoughts swim on thoughts of how to process these men.

Letting them return to their fief and act like nothing happened was of course out of the question.

This last batch of men was Perseus's most zealous and staunch supporters and they needed to be neutralized.

Which was of course the easiest to do by killing them, but Alexander upon ruminating a bit also quickly found many, many alternatives.

He thought about making these men abdicate their position and converting them into priests for his temple, employing them as teachers for his schools or other grassroots administrators, as foremen in some of the less critical industries, or any of the many other numerous civilian tasks he had in his hands.

But perhaps the best plan that he came up with was to try and use them to erode the royal family's remaining prestige.

As for how, well for that they needed to reach the capital- Pathenigh.

Thus the nobles' fate was left in the balance for now, while Alexander rejected all personnel wishing to see him in regards to their ransom.

And with these two of the most pressing concerns finished, Alexander felt he was almost ready to leave the city.

So he started to concentrate on wrapping up the last few bits and pieces.

For one, he paid the defecting Thesians all the coin they were owed, just as he promised.

There were around 3,000 of them, and although the original deal had been for Alexander to pay for 5,000 of them, he had managed to haggle the number down to 4,000.

Then since Perseus had owned the men six months of pay at a monthly rate equivalent to 250 ropals, the total came out to a total of 6 million.

Alexander did feel a tiny bit peeved when paying his sum, especially since he never got to use them against Perseus in that promised betrayal, as the king lost before he could get another pitched battle.

But Alexander ultimately soothed his heart by convincing himself that without their intel, he might not have used the strategy of denying the king battle and forcing him to chase him.

Meaning the battle of Kalimat might not have ever happened and the whole ending could have looked very different.

There was indeed once a time when Alexander had seriously contemplated taking Perseus's peace deal.

Thus when he thought about it like that, Alexander did not feel too bad about giving the money.

Having paid them, Alexander then also offered them an escort of 1,000 men to Lilybee to help charter ships for them.

But the men informed him when they were there, they had found that the city, due to the threat of war, did not have enough ships to take so many of them at once.

This surprised Alexander a bit as the number of ships that would be needed to take 3,000 men was not much, 10 to 15 would do depending on the size.

But it seemed many of the merchants feared Alexander would breach the city and torch or seize the docked vessels.

Thus they left in advance.

Hence Alexander offered the Thesians the chance to charter ships from Zanzan letting them accompany him there.

This was loose end number one.

The next and last one was choosing the 'lucky' legion who were meant to stay behind and accomplish the task of sending the prisoners' families to Zanzan.

Alexander also made sure to give them proper instructions on how to do so, such as asking them to select a few prisoners belonging to each city or village who could then show them the way, as the bulk of the prisoners traveled with Alexander to Zanzan ahead.

He also made enough money to cover the cost of transporting so many men, women, and children.

Alexander estimated that by the completion of the immigration, there would be around 120,000 to 150,000 more men in Zanzan!

This number might sound too huge to be the family of just 10,000 men, but it was actually very reasonable.

A farmer could easily have more than 10 children, and if you counted the fact many of them lived with their extended families with uncles, granduncles, nephews, etc, each of these 'family' could easily reach from 30 or even 50 people!

Dom would be proud.

And it was very much possible that when the soldiers would go to escort those families, the other joined ones might follow suit too in search of work and opportunity.

Thus, not only was Alexander overestimating the numbers here, but in fact, he might even be undercounting a bit here.

But whether that be the case, he decided to leave that problem to Lord Theony to solve.

Thus it was with that conclusion that Alexander decided to finally leave the small city of Kalimat, the place which had seen the fateful conclusion of an epic battle, and more importantly, the end of an era.

Tibias as an independent country had fallen here, and Alexander's domination over it had begun.

And when thinking about it as such, Alexander felt even a bit reluctant to leave.

#### Chapter 898 Revelry At The Capital (Part-1)

Since the city of Kalimat was right next to a river city, rather than marching his huge force through the land, Alexander had decided to send a part of his army along it.

This relatively small river was still part of the huge tributary network that spanned across the entire country, its mother- the mighty Diannu river.

Thus by following it, it was found that they could easily reach Alexander's next destination- the capital Parthenight.

This was one of the most important things that Alexander's men were busy preparing for while the young lord busied himself with his own troubles, as they tried to requisition every available boat in the surrounding vicinity to enable the journey.

However despite their best efforts, given the city's small size and population as well as simply the limited size of the waterway, they were only able to gather a modest number of boats, certainly not enough to escort the more than 40,000 of Alexander's men.

In fact, if you counted the women and children of the newly joined mercenaries as well as the slaves and servants of his own army, that number under Alexander actually reached closer to 70,000- the size of an entire city, making it understandable why the men had failed in their endeavor.

Which was why Alexander decided to use the limited number of boats to send only the physically ill and weak,- such as the wounded and the women and children through the more comfortable path, feeling they would only slow the rest of the party down, while the men marched- including himself.

Alexander could have of course taken the boat but refused to do so for a myriad of reasons.

Outwardly, it was to show that he was just one of the soldiers, ready to bear all the hardship that they too took.

And this propaganda worked quite nicely, as the soldiers were very impressed that their lord was willing to be with them even after they had won and the campaign was over, thus letting Alexander command greater respect for his army.

While internally, Alexander denied himself this comfort mainly because he personally did not like the inherent danger that came with boats- the ever looming threat of drowning.

Given the high status he had managed to achieve in his life, Alexander had grown to love his life more and more dearly and was thus afraid of any such accidents occurring whilst travelling.

He feared that if anything were to happen, surrounded by water on all sides, he would be quite trapped, having a very hard time escaping.

As for what that accident could be,- well the most obvious one would of course be a strong seasonal storm that could capsize a boat..

This was currently the middle of summer and the weather here was quite unpredictable.

And even if the waters stayed calm, Alexander had to also consider the ever present threat of an opportunistic ambush by some small unknown resistance group still lingering in the unexplored woods, wishing to take their revenge on Alexander.

Many prominent figures had died like this, such as Hannibal's own father - who was one of the greatest generals of his time too, and died in an ambush while crossing a river.

Or King Fredrick Barbarossa who had, according to some accounts, fallen into the river from his horse whilst in a campaign and then was unable to get back up due to the heavy armor he was wearing, thus getting swept away by the strong currents.

Alexander did not want to either of them.

It was also because of this that Alexander decided not to the boats carry much of the loot he had collected from Perseus's camp, much more preferring to haul the heavy cargo hundreds of kilometers by land, else fearing they might be lost of the waters.

When Alexander was finally starting to leave the city, Papando had repeatedly invited him to spend a bit more time there, while the surviving residents half sighed in regret seeing them leave. as the presence of such a huge number of men meant business had been boomed during the past few days.

Most businesses had been able to sell their stock twice or even thrice the normal price given the huge price, while the whores had earned so much coin that they started to walk bow legged.

But at the same time they also half sighed in relief as having so many armed foreigners right on their doorsteps was always a disquieting feeling.

Although most of the soldiers paid for the things they took from these shops, who knew when that could change?

Thus the populace generally felt that it was a good thing that Alexander had left had.

The three week journey from Kalimat to Parthenigh was largely uneventful for Alexander, with the traveling men mostly keeping their spirit high all along the journey, buoyed by their magnificent win and periodically cheering at all the loot they had managed to haul.

It was amongst such revelry that Alexander reentered the capital, where his reception was understandably lukewarm to say the least.

In fact, as he moved through the streets, Alexander noticed that the houses on both sides of the streets had all their windows tightly shut as if the people were afraid to even look at him.

'Do they think I'm going to sack them?' Alexander mirthlessly chuckled in his heart.lights

But he did not do any offense to the actions of these people.

They were not worth it.

Instead, he turned his attention more to the magnificent feat that surely awaited him at the palace.

Alexander's approach to here was no secret and given the news of his victory had already spread, he was sure the palace would be ready to receive him with the most appropriate refreshments.

And he was not disappointed, as the proper attitude was set right at the outer gates of the palace, the one that did not even lead to the palace, but simply the palace walkway.

It was from this point that Alexander was personally received by the three most prominent royals residing there- Queen Parthia, and his two daughters, who were then flanked by various members of the surviving royal family, all led by Theony.

Yes, while Alexander was away, he left the city temporarily in charge of Lord Theony's son, with a small garrison to make sure the man followed the orders.

"Greetings, oh great conqueror." The first to receive Alexander at the gates was the queen herself, who pronounced these words in a sweet, clear voice, like it was a lullaby, as she then elegantly bowed, leading everyone else to follow suit.

There must have been at least 50 people present there, minus the guards, and seeing all these once haughty individuals lowered their heads so deeply in such a synchronous manner, greatly stoked Alexander's ego.

These were people who were supposed to only receive other's bow, not ever receive it.

But here he was, once a mere slave, now a great conqueror, forcing them to commit exactly such a humiliating display.

The realization filled his heart with joy and pride.

So he took his time scanning all the raven heads pointing differentially towards him and internally gloating to himself.

"You may rise," And it took Alexander a moment to respond to their action, as he finally gestured them up with his arms while trying to make his voice as deep and imperious as he could muster.

And once the entourage was again standing still, Alexander imperiously looked down on them atop his magnificently decorated horse, trying to memorize the various delicious faces these people were making knowing their time up.

Until finally Alexander's eyes landed on the mature woman- the Queen, the most beautiful flower out of them all.

He found that the lady, who he was told to be in her mid to late forties, looked barely in her early thirties.

Her face, although mired with a deep air of melancholy given their fall of grace was still very beautiful- heart shaped with fluffy rosy cheeks, a small cute nose, thick ruby red lips and slightly slanted up, phoenix like eyes.

Her jet black raven hair was very simply done, and Alexander had noticed that it was only tied to the back with a tasteful hair band made in the shape of a metallic flowers that was stubbed with jewels.

It was neither too gaudy nor looked to be of too low quality, conveying a sense of restraint and elegance, making Alexander suspects that the lady had probably done so intentionally, to show Alexander that although they were not destitute, but they were also not as rich as him, and that they were his subjects.

It was a symbolic surrender that Alexander quite appreciated.

Following her face, Alexander found her body wrapped up in a jet black gown to sport a very curvy figure, with ample motherly bosoms and a thick flank.

Where the body needed meat, she had meat and wherever it was deemed unsightly, she had shed.

A combination of good food, good status and good genes seemed to have produced a bombshell of a woman, and given Alexander's pent up status, his eyes suddenly burned with embers towards this mature woman.

A sight that did not go unnoticed by Lady Pathia who had been very sensitive to such looks and she shuddered.

Chapter 899 Revelry At The Capital (Part-2)

The impure thoughts invading Alexander regarding the mature woman only lasted an ephemeral second, for it was just the by-product of his lust speaking.

The man had not yet had the chance to relieve himself even a month after the ordeal and thus when faced with such a beautiful but defenseless victim, his primal instinct urged him to indulge

Imaginary flashes of what it would be like to have the woman under him, or atop him, or kneeling in front of him all subconsciously raced through Alexander's mind, as that pure, beautiful face standing in front of him changed to produce various more 'expressive' expressions.

And then he heard a small voice inside him entice him with menacing whispers such as,

"Take her! Her husband had lost to you. So by all accounts, she belongs to you."

"Remember! The greatest happiness of a man is to scatter one's enemy, to drive them before him, to see their cities reduced to ashes, to see those who love them shrouded in tears, and to gather into one's bosom their wives and daughters."

It was a poisonous thought, and seeing how the Queen's facade changed to a slightly pale color right in front of Alexander as the man kept staring at her, the man could tell the lady had likely figured out his thoughts.

After all, such a thing was not anything too unusual given the time period.

But in reality, Alexander would never force upon this defenseless woman.

Sure he might not be above using trickery to wile them into bed, but he never r@ped anyone.

However given the woman had already misunderstood him, Alexander doubted there was any good to resolve it.

Explaining to her likely would not work.

Thus Alexander could only quickly revert his gaze and distract her with a slightly taunting smirk,

"My lady, I see that you are not very happy to see me. Is that why you are wearing a black gown?"

He said this because in Tibias, the color black was seen as a very bad omen, typically associated with death, misfortune, and other inauspicious events.

While consequently. the opposite color- white, was celebrated as a divine color, symbolizing all things good and pure.

That was why the priests at the temple wore snow white robes.

It was because of such a dichotomy that other than a very few select groups of people, such as prisoners, nobody ever wore pure black in their everyday lives.

It was only worn in funerals and other such somber events.

Hence for the Queen to be wearing such a color seemed quite inappropriate.

And hearing Alexander's query, the first to sigh was Theony, who slanted his eyes to try and give a venomous look to the woman.

He had tried and tried till his mouth almost foamed to convince her to wear more colorful clothes, but the Queen would not budge.

"I will wear black or I will wear nothing." She had threatened, and as much as Theony would have loved to parade his regal woman in front of Alexander bare, he did not dare.

Thus he could only grit his teeth and pray that Alexander did not pitnick.

However the gods did not seem to have responded to that wish.

"No, I would never dare to be disrespectful to you, my lord. You are the victor and we are gracious enough to accept our loss," At Alexander's query, the Queen did not shirk back even a bit but instead boldly replied so.

And then offered her reason, "It is just that my husband has still not woken up from his injuries. Thus it would be too unfaithful of me to partake in revelry while my 'lord' suffers. Hence I'm afraid I'm unable to appear pleasing to your eyes Lord of Zanan."

Lady Parthia always addressed Perseus as 'lord' and as she said this, her voice was servile but very strong, showing she could not change no matter what.

It seemed she was utterly devoted to her husband, something that Alexander was quite impressed by

"I see. Then I hope he recovers quickly." Thus he decided to excuse her with these few words, even letting go of the fact that the lady had not really apologized for the faux pass.

And as for how Perseus was already in the palace, well of course it was because the part of the army Alexander had sent by boats had managed to arrive much sooner, and the wounded Perseus was part of that group

.lights

Upon entering the palace, Alexander's next few days went in a blur.

More particularly his days passed by attending huge feasts that started at dawn and lasted until late into the night.

It was a spectacle of great grandeur to witness, a momentous occasion where the echoes of victory reverberated through the halls of the palace and into the hearts of the people present.

And to make things even better there was not just one party.

There were multiple ones, held day after day consecutively for nearly a week.

However the most prominent one was the one set in the courtyard after the day he had arrived, the venue surrounded by towering stone walls that were adorned with colorful banners that proudly displayed Alexander's standard, the blue flower in a field of green, accompanied on the side by other smaller houses such as Lord Theony's as well as other Zanzan nobles.

The air there was thick with the scent of roasted meats cooked with fragrant herbs, as numerous long wooden tables were laden with a cornucopia of culinary delights, inviting all to partake in the bounties of the land.

The strong wooden legs of the huge serving tables groaned under the weight of the sheer enormous volume, with the items in view clearly reflecting the seasonal abundance and the culinary expertise of the cooks of the time and region.

There were roasted meats of various kinds. boar, venison, fowl, peacock, etc. all seasoned with herbs and spices and cooked in all kinds of various ways, before being decoratively carved and served onto the plates. their succulent aromas wafting through the air.

Along with them came various hearty buttery stews brimming with local vegetables and grains, expensive white loaves of bread baked to golden perfection, tens of different types of local artisanal

cheeses, beautiful and exotic fruits arranged in beautiful, colorful shapes as displays, and many many more, these were just the most prominent ones.

Various local dishes and cuisines that were too many to list also made their presence, ones which many times Alexander did not even know what kind of food the item was until he tasted it.

And among all the new types of food, his favorite was definitely a type of red colored stew made with beetroot and deer meat.

It was sweet, spicy, and gammy at the same time.

Then, to help wash all these down came the various wines and mead, which flowed openly adding a warm and intoxicating element to the festivities.

Tibias was famous for its grapes and so the catalog of wines under its belt was truly enormous, their taste as varied as they were interesting.

The drinks present ranged from rich and velvety that sang as in entered the throat, to sweet, honeyed notes that seemed to enhance the sensory experience, to spicy dry toasts that perked oneself up, there was all, managing to create an atmosphere of conviviality and joy.

The attendees at the feast were also bedecked in resplendent attires of the time, reflecting the diversity and difference of culture between the various regions.

And yes there were people from many regions, not just two, since some of the high ranking Kaiser and Petricuno mercenaries were invited as well, as well as the Thesian contingent that was traveling with them.

Thus it could be clearly seen that while Zanzan men much preferred darker colored tunics such as dark blue and marsh green, the Tibians liked lighter and happier ones like yellow and orange.

The men from Thesos were a whole other story, as men from various city states had their own identities, forming a mishmash of all kinds of styles and preferences.

While the Kaiswer mercenaries wore their best and shiniest ceremonial armor.

The feast was of course not merely a banquet for the stomach but it was also a spectacle for the senses.

Minstrels, jugglers, and jesters had been all invited to perform there, entertaining the crowd with music, acrobatics, and witty performances.

The melodies of lutes and harps intertwined with the laughter of the revelers, while at some point there were even mock gladiatorial combats, where nobles and other officials showed off their martial skill, engaging in friendly and sometimes even showy duels and swordplay, demonstrating their prowess in the arts of war to the delight of the onlookers.

It was amidst this revelry that night descended and as a ceremonial bonfire was lit, Alexander decided to give a concluding speech,

"My victorious lords! This win is our win. What we did today will surely reverberate throughout the annals of history for a thousand years!"

"My newly defeated lords! Do not lament. For under me, you will prosper more than you could have ever dreamed before."

"I am like this bonfire... burning away all your past hardships and bringing in the dawn of a new era!"

Chapter 900 Carving Up Tibias (Part-1)

It was nearly a week after entering the capital that the celebrations were finally concluded and let me tell you, those seven days were truly wild.

Eating and drinking all sorts of food, meat, cheese, and bread to one's heart content during the day, while laying with various beautiful women at night, Alexander would be lying if he said he was not even slightly rueful to see the party finally end.

Alexander must have laid with at least 20 different women during that time, possibly more, as he was so drunk many of the times that sometimes he could not even know who was under him.

For most of the instances, only sudden flashes of the events remained in his memories.

Such as- he recalled seeing a petite brunette moaning with modest breasts whimpering as he tore her hymen, her small tunnel grossly inadequate to house his huge organ.

Next to her was a curvy mature woman, likely a relative of hers judging by the similar looks, who seemed to be saying something while caressing the girl's head, likely trying to soothe her pain as she occasionally landed gentle kisses.

Then the scenery suddenly changed, and Alexander found himself behind that very mature woman, taking her hot pussy from a standing position while roughly squeezing her soft breasts as the woman lewdly screamed her throat out.

And lastly, he saw the younger brunette on top of the mature woman, a thick manly finger poking into the wrinkled hole, her once tight, fair butt now turned stark red with Alexander's handprints, as both of their tiny slit by now had transformed into a huge gaping wide hole leaking Alexander's white gift.

As he recalled this, Alexander half regretted that he could not properly remember taking this legendary combination- a mother daughter pair.

Or at the very least an aunt given the two's similar looks.

But such regret was only ephemeral, as he quickly remembered similar raunchy events from the following days, such as multiple faces worshiping his turgid organ, a train of women straddling him, and lastly a series of naked butts lifting themselves up into the air, ready to be penetrated by him.

The women being offered to him were as varied as they were beautiful, each with their own unique traits.

Some would cry lewdly when Alexander pounded them, while others would try to hold it in shame.

Some would be very sensitive, while it would take others some time to get in the mood.

Some were virgins, some were recently widowed, and some had given birth multiple times.

Theony, who was the main person to arrange all this, had managed to include every possible preference a man might when presenting the girls to Alexander, all to try and please him to his fullest.

The only thing tying all these girls from being sent to entertain Alexander in common was that they were all former nobles.

Their backstory was really all the same.

These women had their house's male population basically completely wiped out in all the preceding battles, and given that they had no suitable heir, Alexander was more than happy to take advantage of their weakened state to demote and destroy these households once and for all, taking all their lands for him and his retainers.

And he did not feel the slightest twinge of regret over him, knowing if they were in his position, if the roles were reversed, they would have done the same if not worse.

These men had fought and resisted him, trying to kill him, and this was their just deserts.

Alexander would be stupid to reward the progeny and kin of these men who tried to resist him with gifts and mercy.

And it was with this thought that Alexander had approached Lord Theony during his march to the capital, consulting him if it would be possible to arrange such a thing.

"Of course! Of course! No problem my lord."

"You can have any girl in the country you want. All of them if you so desire!" And the man had not only agreed but answered with so much alacrity that Alexander could not half fear he might send his own wife to warm his bed.

Which was not even that ridiculous a thought given that the man had once proposed to have his son in laws killed just so that Alexander could marry his daughters.

So it was quite a relief for Alexander to know his bed warmers were only fallen ladies, not actual nobles.

And as for what happened to these ladies after they had their one night stand with Alexander, well most of them were bought by the other nobles as pleasure slaves, or if they were really unlucky by various pleasure houses, while a very select few were chosen by Alexander to be sent to Ptolomy as gifts.

Given his successful campaign, such a thing, though not required, was expected.lights

It had to be noted that Alexander was also not the only one to enjoy himself with the women.

The various nobles enjoyed themselves too and it could even be argued that they enjoyed themselves even better than Alexander.

For at one point during the celebration, just like how a leopard cannot change its spots, the Zanzan nobles decided to even host a 'traditional' Adhanian party, one held deep at night in a secluded part of the mansion.

It was a party where clothing was optional, and with all the newly defeated Tibian women and men having made to participate, as well the presence of many of the concubines of the nobles, the 'food' being served was naturally very grand.

The various lewd plays and sensual actives on display, led by the more experienced Zanzan nobles and their entourage were a complete eye opener for the newcomers, who even felt a bit mortified at some points of the party when the immorality in open display reached ever newer heights.

Men and women took each other in ways that these people could not even imagine was possible and the many creative games that the nobles came up with to show off the women's shameful parts in various exotic ways stunned most.

(Author note: I skipped describing these parts because I thought many would not like reading multiple men and women enjoying themselves. Comment if you think it is better this way or if you would prefer a greater explanation.)

Alexander had been of course invited very graciously to attend the event too, and while he remembered saying no, he was also so drunk that he could not remember anything afterward, i.e.- whether he had actually followed through with it or simply attended the event regardless.

He had no memory regardless.

If he thought he did not attend it, then no countermemory surfaced to contradict him.

And if he thought he did attend it, then dream like flashes of taking part in various activities typical of such a party surfaced, and he could not tell if it was his imagination conjuring up images or if he had really taken part.

And by the time he had recovered, he was also too embarrassed to ask.

Recovering from his drunken hangover after a week, Alexander at last was able to return back to work.

And once again back behind his desk, as his first and foremost task, he started to write letters.

First and foremost he wrote letters to Zanzan, informing the various nobles there of the details of his victory.

Although many had already gotten the news from informal channels prior, while others quickly figured out that things were probably going well given that Alexander had already sent part of the captured loot back.

Trains of carts laden with gold, silver, jewels, rolls of fabric, high quality tanned leather, herds of pack animals, and at last a small army of slaves were only the most prominent goods captured.

All such things were quite hard to miss, so Alexander's letter was more of a formality acknowledging his achievements rather than actual news.

Hence, although there was certainly joy among the nobility and the populace for this win, it was not uproarious.

It was a more like wave of silent pleasure gently caressing over them.

Aside from this information, Alexander's letter also asked the handful of nobles residing in the city to send representatives to the Tibian capital to take part in the sharing of the booty, with most of them then sending their sons since they could not exactly leave the city due to their various administrative duties.

While the nobles received these instructions alongside Alexander's news of victory, his wife, Cambyses received a more special letter, with greater instructions.

She had of course received Alexander's victory almost the very day he had won at Kalimat, as Alexander sent a messenger bird then and there.

So he did not repeat too many of the events there, instead promising to tell her all about it once he got back.

Instead, in the letter sent to her, aside from the usual fluff such as asking how she and the children were, Alexander asked her to send Theocles and Ophenia to the capital to act as priests and priestesses when the Tibian nobles swore fealty to him, as well as giving her detailed plans on how to prepare the city for his 'Triumph.'