

## **Herald 91**

### Chapter 91 Quartermaster Theocles

Alexander did not let the slight problem of over encumbrance let his stump him for long, as he soon came up with a way to maximize his cargo-carrying capacity.

But for now, he kept that to himself.

And addressed, "Well, I guess that wraps it up for today. Please try to complete the possession and tally of the Cantagenan treasures by today." And as one last note, I know that morale is kinda low. So, I hope leaders can pay some of the soldiers' dues from the Cantagenan loot."

Quickly, Alexander then offered a compromise, "If you are unable to pay them for the full two months, then give them at least a month's pay. And if you are unable to offer it in coin, pay them with goods."

"The commander makes a good point. I will do it," Petricuno seriously nodded at the genuine advice.

"Hehe, the soldiers have no idea what a magnificent commander they have got," Heliptos flattered.

So, having covered almost all the topics he wanted to, Alexander finished, "Well, then here's the summary of today's meeting,"

"One- Melodias will send his scouts north, Ohhh, and don't forget the double rations for those who got us the Acme route," Alexander again reminded.

"Two- Melodias will give re-assign the Cantagenan horse trainers to me."

"Three- Each group will send two hundred men for cavalry practice."

"Four- We will try to lay off excess slaves"

"Five- We will try to finish the loot collection by today."

"And six- We will have drills to test out the new command structure."

"Ohh," Alexander exclaimed, seeming to remember something, "The rains have yet to stop huh?" Alexander looked out through his tent flaps to see that the rain had not only subsisted but also seemed to have even increased its intensity.

"The soldiers might get sick in this rain," Petricuno chimed in caution.

But Alexander was not fazed, "Hmmp, the drills will occur whether the rain subsides or not. If our soldiers are afraid of a bit of water, then how are they gonna stand up to swords and arrows?"

He then commanded with gusto, "Leaders, other than Melodias will gather five hundred of their troops by lunch. All of you are to obtain your horses by then."

"And, since the soldiers will work hard today, assign them double the portions. We have the meat and I doubt any will complain after getting to eat so much meat in one day."

"Okay, commander." A chorus reverberated.

"Then let us finish today. Thank you leaders, and see you tomorrow same place same time," Alexander signaled the end of the long meeting.

But as some of them were about to exit, Alexander in a dramatic fashion cried out, "Ohh, I had almost forgotten."

"There's this tiny thing. Minor really. You see, currently, each of the groups control their own logistics with their own quartermaster. This is very inefficient and wasteful."

"So, since we will be fighting together as one army, I was just thinking of making one centralized logistics core with one main quartermaster and two assistants."

"So, how about Theocles as the quartermaster and one assistant from Menicus and one from Heliptos?"

Alexander finished this long talk under one long breath.

The reason why he had decided to bring such an important topic, a topic he had described as a minor one, which it certainly was not, at such a late time was because of a negotiation technique he had learned from his previous life.

The idea was to make a long, complicated offer just at the end of a, preferably long discussion, just as when everyone, exhausted from the meeting was eager to get out and get refreshed.

This had the psychological effect of catching the opponent off guard most of the time as they are usually too distracted by their wanting for the meeting to just end.

And luckily for Alexander, it worked like a charm here, as Heliptos practically jumped in joy, "Yes, that's an amazing idea, commander."

Menicus too did not contest Alexander's proposal, as he found the idea good for the army and also thought Theocles, who he had communicated with several times before, was a competent man to get the post.

And though Petricuno wanted to, he understood that alone, he stood no chance and so bitterly complied.

And thus, almost in a matter of moments, Alexander had managed to gain control over the food, medical, and wine supply of the camp.

He was ecstatic at the ease with which he had gained such massive control over his army and with a big smile saw the leaders off, "Esteemed leaders, please be careful on your way. And remember to use the rain to replenish your water supply."

Alexander then noticed that Melodias was having a hard time leaving the tent as if a strange force both kept pulling him into the tent and so pushing him out.

To Alexander, it was as if he was contemplating whether to get out or stay.

But at last, the mercenary leader seemed to have made up his mind and after giving Alexander a deep gaze quickly strode out.

'He's been acting so weird today.' Alexander commented in confusion and then a weird thought penetrated his mind, 'Don't tell me he's in love with me,' which sent goosebumps through his body.

Homosexuality was common in this era and many people he knew even regularly practiced it, to which Alexander was usually indifferent to.

But in no way did he swing that way and had absolutely no interest in that

But soon he cast away this ridiculous thought and thought about simply asking Melodias

if there was any problem and if he could help in any way,

But, chose to refrain at the last minute as Alexander felt he was not yet close enough to make such personal inquiries.

And so with this, the command tent became empty, save Menes who stayed behind.

But as soon as the leaders vacated, the tent space was again occupied by Alexander's own captains and a few new faces.

Along with the usual Camius, Theocles, and Pallidus, there was also Remus, Bartholomew, and a few more fresh faces.

They were all here to give their own reports or get new orders or both.

So Alexander took Menes and Pallidus's report about the training of the Cantagenans and patiently heard the typical frustrations that usually accompanied training green recruits- unruly, undisciplined, dumb, cowardly, the usual lot.

And after Alexander gave them the pep talk of- 'do your best' and 'hang in there' and 'be strict with the troops', he chose to listen to his much-anticipated report- the report from Theocles.

He then listened to Theocles's report about the progress of the Cantagenan looting and carefully cross-referenced with the numbers Menicus told him.

Thankfully the numbers were close enough.

Alexander also noticed the dark circles under Theocle's eyes and joked, "Tough night?"

"Hehe, for twenty-five million tustas I could stay awake a week." The smell of the potential money seemed to have reenergized Theocles as although his body showed signs of fatigue, his spirit was high.

Also, according to Theocles, the figure Menicus had given them of a hundred million tustas was too conservative. The much closer figure would be around hundred and twenty to hundred and thirty million.

But, Alexander did not hold this against Menicus as he did say the one hundred million was a conservative number.

Also, it had to be said that just a small initial difference in price assumption, something like only a few hundred tustas for something like a vase, can produce estimates differing by millions when the value of similar vases numbering by the tens of thousands is estimated.

Although Menicus could be underreporting the value and scheme to take the difference though Alexander chose to believe the former as there was no evidence of the latter.

"Hehe, they were up all night trying to finish the looting as soon as possible. They are still going at it now. Camius decided to tell Alexander some further interesting news.

Alexander simply smiled and praised, "You have done an enormous service for the group. Please continue your excellent work, Theocles."

"It is what I should do," Theocles humbly replied.

Then Alexander gave some good news, "You have secured very large funds for us, helping us in our most trying times. As such, in light of your massive contribution and dedication to the group, I have some very good news for you.

He then offered. "Congratulations. All the leaders today have decided to form a centralized logistics department that will control all the supplies of the army and they chose you as the quartermaster. Congralutions, \*clap\*, \*clap\*."

Following Alexander's action, the whole tent also broke into thunderous applause as many different versions of congratulations such as good job, nice and amazing were thrown at him.

Theocles was almost overwhelmed by the praise and he kneeled in front of Alexander and prayed, "I thank the commander for giving me this chance in his infinite grace. I swear as long as I possess this body, I shall strive to serve you."

"Um, I will continue to rely on your patronage," Alexander almost imperiously replied.

But there was one person who was not so thrilled.

'If only I had been smart enough to switch sides quick enough,' Pallidus thought, watching this display with bitterness in his heart as dark, treacherous thoughts splashed in there.

But, unfortunately, Alexander was so high up and so powerful now that any schemes Pallidus could think off would likely appear less than trivial to him, and could be blown away with the easiest of ease.

'Who could have known that slave could have become this powerful in mere three days? What a monster! Dammit, why did I have to offend this cursed star.'" Pallidus sorely regretted his past action.

But as they, 'There's no pill for regret,' and Pallidus was finding that out first hand.

## Chapter 92 New Promotions

Alexander finished declaring Theocle's new appointment and then warmed, "Remember, I will not tolerate any corruption or hiding supplies or any favoritism, not even towards us. I want you to always do what is best for the army. If the army needs something, you should be able to provide it."

It was unknown if Alexander was just saying it as a show in front of everybody or if he really meant it.

"I swear by the gods to upload my task to the highest degree of scrutiny," Theocles vowed.

"And I want you to get along with the two assistants that will be working for you, while also keeping them in line."

"I will not let them harm us," Theocle nodded.

"Umm, that's your future job," Alexander then paused a bit before starting, "But now, your job is to get the best deal for us from the Cantagenan fortunes. I want you to get as many small, easy-to-carry valuables as you can. Our baggage train will not be able to carry much bulky things."

"I will ..try," Theoclees said this sentence with a bit of difficulty,

Because everyone faced the same problem and so everyone wanted the same things.

"Um, do your best."

Then with a nod, Alexander turned to Menes, "Your report said we have five thousand Cantagenan servants and slaves- from ordinary cooks, cleaners and washers, to artisan jobs like blacksmiths, armorers and bookkeepers, right?"

"That's right, commander," The giant nodded.

"Good. Your job today is to recruit the two thousand male servants and slaves. But if they have artisan skills like the ones I mentioned, they don't need to join. They are far more useful maintaining the army than fighting."

"As the remaining three thousand are women- we don't need them. Tomorrow...no day after tomorrow, we will make them leave the camp. It is cruel but such is reality, \*sigh\*." Alexander let out a heavy breath of regret

"Commander, some of the women are married," Camius chirped, implying Alexander's command would throw out the wives of some of the men he wanted to recruit.

"They can stay." Alexander gave the exception. "But, use today and tomorrow to properly vet who are truly married and who are just saying it stay in the camp." He ordered.

"Them, it would be prudent to keep this news secret," Camius spoke out aloud as if reminding those there to watch their tongue.

"Okay, so Camius will be responsive for gathering the men. He will do it by today. And Menes will organize and oversee the training of all Cantagenan recruits." Alexander gave clear instructions.

He then took water from a nearby pitcher and after killing his thirst, in a sober tone, addressed everyone, "Our group has changed unrecognizably just in the last three days. We have lost three of our most experienced captains, five hundred brothers, and even Nestoras- our dear leader."

"And in a twist of fate, we are now being tasked with commanding almost five thousand troops, along with two hundred cavalry."

Alexander then took a deep breath, "This large increase of troops has produced challenges that will need the effort of strong, competent leaders to manage and overcome."

Alexander was basically saying he would now announce promotions and appoint new captains.

"So, first with our own group- we have around eight hundred men, mainly in the second, and the fifth phalanx, while the third is gone, and the first and fourth are below strength."

"So, the second will be split in between the first and fourth, and the fifth will be renamed third."  
Alexander decided to break up Pallidus's supporters, whom Pallidus led in the second phalanx.

This was almost unacceptable to Pallidus who could barely keep his tone steady, "Commander, I must protest. The below strength first and third could be merged to make one unit."

Pallidus made a very solid point, but Alexander was not doing this because of military reasons but political.

So he laughed, "Stratos Pallidus, the first and thirds have lost their most valiant soldiers in battle. So they need soldiers from the second to teach them courage and bravery."

But Pallidus did not hear most of what Alexander had said as only one word kept buzzing inside his mind, 'Stratos', 'Stratos', 'Stratos'.

'I am stratos? Alexander promoted me?' Pallidus thought incredulously, as he had written off any possible promotion under Alexander.

He would count himself lucky if Alexander did not demote him, which in fairness Alexander had a mind to, but was yet to find a suitable replacement.

"Congratulation, stratos Pallidus, haha congratulations," Theocles patted him on the shoulder, laughing loudly.

Pallidus too shared the smile and then promptly bowed, "Thank you, Commander. I will lead the soldiers through heaven and hell for you,"

"At ease, We have five thousand troops to lead. We need people like you to lead the green Cantagenans to victory." Alexander smiled.

But only a few like Camius noticed the darkness in Alexander's azure eyes.

'This is not a promotion, dumbass' Camius cursed Pallidus in his heart.

"Commander our phalanxes are about two fifty strong. So with three phalanxes that still leaves fifty," The very clever Remus did not let the math deceive him.

"Haha," Alexander chuckled, "The excess will be under Menes. We should have some veterans to teach those greenhorn peasants."

"Thanks, I really needed the extra hand," Menes gratefully smiled.

Alexander then chose new captains for his group, "The first phalanx captain will be Bartholomew, the second ...the new second phalanx captain will be Azmesh, and the third captain will be Ormoth."

These were people all close to him and Menes.

After these people thanked him with the usual platitudes, Alexander announced new stratos, "The Cantagenans will be around three-four thousand, so that Menes will lead one thousand, Camius the other, and like I already mentioned Pallidus the other. The last stratos will be chosen by me from the Cantagenans day after tomorrow,"

"Also I was to choose new captains for the Cantagenans tomorrow. That will be delayed to the day after. Every stratos are to choose eight candidates from which I will take four."

"And the last of all, Remus will be the commander of the two hundred cavalry."

Alexander's last statement produced an uncomfortable silence as many looked at one another, signaling and urging the other to object.

But Alexander's prestige was so high most did not have the guts.

But at last, one brave soul, picked up the courage, "Commander, isn't Remus too young," Menes expressed the group's collective concern,

"That's right, commander. I think captain Menes will be a much better pick," Even the sixteen-year-old Remus did not have confidence in him.

"Remus has never been to war, let alone lead others to one. Placing him as the head of such a big, expensive cavalry unit is reckless." Pallidus did not hold back his criticism.

'You were so meek till now. And now, just because I gave you a small promotion, you returned to your usual state huh?' Alexander sneered in his heart, happy that he will not have to rescind that order about framing Pallidus to Camius.

In face of the fierce protest, Alexander defended his decision, "Very few of us have the horse riding experience Remus has and none his talent."

This cooled everyone down a bit as they recalled Remus's past.

He was an orphan in Zantralia, a city renowned for its livestock produce.

So from the age he could walk, he learned to herd sheep and cattle, either of nearby farms or those the orphanage kept.

Thus from an early life, he grew accustomed to riding ponies and horses, giving him an innate sense of control over the animal.

This was opposed to many others like Alexander and Menes, who as slaves, had little practice with a horse comparatively.

"Commander, perhaps Remus could join the cavalry for now and slowly become the leader as he accumulates prestige. Horse riders, thinking the elites they are, are always very haughty." Camius also gave his advice, thinking his friend was not quite familiar with the temperament of many cavalrymen.

And there was a precedence to Camius's words, as evidenced by the Sycarians acting independently to Agapios.

The concerns raised by Camius gave Alexander pause as he reconsidered his appointment.

He had only thought of the boy's raw talent and skills and forgot to take into the innate hostility he would inevitably face.

But he was reluctant to replace Remus, because he believed the boy could shine very brightly in the cavalry corp.

So he stalled, "Hmmm, I agree all of you make some very good points,"

'But' Camius seemed to telepathically know the next Alexander would say.

"But, the cavalry drills will last a few days. Let us judge Remus then based on his performance. If it's not satisfactory we will choose a new captain." Alexander proposed

And as such everyone consented.

"Oh, Remus, I want your unit to prioritize practice throwing javelins, and not on spear charges." Alexander gave him the order, and then detailed, "The purpose of your unit is to be skirmishers, to harass and disturb the enemy and not necessarily engage and kill them."

"Okay,," Remus slightly bowed, his body a bit shaking during it.

This was because he was still a bit shocked by his new post.

A cavalry captain's status was far above that of a regular phalanx captain and neared that of a stratos.

And somehow he, who had never fought a battle in his battle was suddenly made into one.

He was first overwhelmed at the news, then excited at the prospect, and at last a bit afraid that he might not be able to live up to the expectations his commander and mentor had put on him.

'I must work hard,' The boy said to himself with determination.

#### Chapter 93 Finally A Bit Of Wealth

"Okay, now for the most exciting part," Alexander then smiled enigmatically which made many wonder what could be more important than promotions.

Alexander began his speech, "We have not had any coin for the last two months. And so morale is running a bit low."

"But, as many of you know, by the grace of the gods we have managed to acquire some. So, I believe the soldiers deserve some." He lightly smiled.

"The commander is the best," Remus unable to hold his excitement loudly cheered and was joined by many others.

Alexander let the murmurs decrease and gave the exact numbers, "All eight hundred of will get our full pay, five thousand tustas, two thousand in coin, and three thousand in goods."

"Each ordinary soldier will also get an additional five thousand tustas as a gift from me," Alexander transformed the things he 'stole' from the Cantagenans into presents, turning him from a thief to a philanthropist.

This made many cheer things like, "The commander's heart is boundless like the sky," and "The soldiers shall drink to the commander's health."

"Now, for the higher-ups." Alexander lightly smiled and made many anticipate the numbers.

"The three captains will get an additional fifty thousand..."

"Ohhhohhh," Bartholow did not let Alexander finish and began cheering.

But Alexander raised his voice and pushed through, "...will get an additional fifty thousand tustas, five thousand in coin, rest in loot."

"And if Remus can become the captain, because he is so young and in the cavalry unit, he will get a hundred thousand tustas, with ten thousand in coin.

"I will try hard," Remus answered excitedly with steely determination.

Alexander then continued, "The three stratos will each get two hundred thousand tustas, twenty thousand in coin, rest in loot."

"Thanks," Camius casually smiled, not standing in grand ceremony with his friend.

"And at last, Theocles, who has managed to make the quartermaster of the army will get half a million tustas, fifty thousand as coin."

"I thank the commander," Theocles deeply bowed.

"Um," Alexander hummed and then said, "I remember you telling me that the transfer will finish by today. So, I want everyone paid by the day after tomorrow. Work hard."

"Yes," Theocles nodded.

"So, I guess this concludes our meeting.." Alexander attempted to terminate the meeting.

But Camius interjected, "Commander, you have not announced a reward for yourself."

This made Alexander turn to Camius and give a light smile, conveying he was internally pleased by this.

In an effort to not appear greedy, he had intentionally omitted himself, even though he wanted a part of the loot.

So, he had hoped someone else would raise the issue by themselves.

And thankfully Camius, with his high observational skills did.

"Haha, I don't need any reward. Working for the good of everyone is enough of a reward," Alexander attempted to turn down the offer with fake modesty.

"Hehe, commander is too humble. But if the commander feels he needs no reward then I don't need it too," Theocles announced.

"Yes, me neither,"

"None of us do,"

A chorus echoed.

"Okay, okay, I will take it." Alexander had a fake helpless tone to his voice.

And then he asked the all-important question, "But how much?"

Here Camius again took the lead, "Everyone, you should all be aware by now of all the things the commander has done for us. So many that we can't even begin to list them all down. Over the last ten years, he has produced miracles after miracles and we owe a debt to him we can never hope to repay."

"Yeah, he helped me get my freedom," Menes spoke up.

"His medicines cured so many of us," Theocles shouted.

"He saved my life," Remus chimed.

Camius looked around everyone, nodding his head, and then said, "I heard that the total worth will be tens of millions of tustas. I propose we give a quarter of everything to the commander."

'Five million tustas!' Alexander almost jumped in fright. He had assumed he would be able to at best fleech a million.

"Yeah, let's give him even more. Let's give half," Menes who had a bit less sense of money cheered for even more.

"Hehe, since one insisting then I will not be polite and take the quarter offer," Alexander had a sly smile on his face.

'I wonder how much of it was staged,' Pallidus darkly remunerated.

"That's great, commander. Besides you might need that money, given your new family, hahaha" Camius loudly joked which spread throughout the tent while Alexander placidly looked at Camius.

If it was anyone other than him, he would have been shoveling shit out of the latrine for the rest of his life.

But Camius had earned this privilege.

"Okay, then let's finish today." Alexander again called for the meeting to end, again reiterating, "Remember everything that was discussed, and also, all military exercise and training will take place, regardless of the rain or not. And today, because of the rain all soldiers participating in the exercise will get double rations."

"So again, congratulations to all the new captains and stratos. I pray all of you will strive and struggle to your utmost limit to help us stride through these difficult times And see you all tomorrow."

The crowd returned a "Have a good day, commander," and then all left, except Camius who Alexander specifically told to stay behind.

"Thanks for getting me at least five million tustas," Was the first time Alexander said to his spy, grinning ear to ear.

With this wealth, Alexander could afford to never work a single day in his life.

"Haha, you deserve every single copper of it," Camius returned the smile, "Without you, I would have died on that street."

This sentence made Alexander reminisce about the fateful meeting of this unlikely duo.

Years ago, Alexander with a few others was sent to the market for some grocery shopping. There he witnessed an altercation between a street hustler and a rich merchant, where the hustler was caught by the merchant's guards and then promptly stabbed in the guts multiple times, before being left to bleed out on the streets.

That hustler was, as you have guessed- Camius.

Seeing no man had the slightest bit of intention in helping the criminal, and all were content to let him just die on the dirt road tugged at Alexander's heart who quickly approached the bleeding man, used the water in his leather pouched to wash away the dust and grime around the wound and made a bandage over the wound with his own tunic.

Then he made his entourage carry the poor soul all the way to their camp, sew up his wounds, and feed and shelter him as he recovered.

All for free.

Such philanthropy was naturally not well received by the others, to say the least, and Alexander even got an earful from Nestoras, who made him do many extra chores.

Alexander also had to do even more chores to make up for the cost of Camius's lodgings.

"Hmph, if I had met you now, I might not have saved you," Alexander was a lot more tender-hearted then, still holding on to some of the naiveties of his past life.

But his hard work did pay off as if not for Camius's espionage, he would have likely died by their scheme.

"I would not have got caught now. As you should know," Camius smirked, meaning that the skills he use to spy for Alexander are the same skills he used as a street hustler.

Camius had been moved by the way Alexander cared for him and chose to join the mercenaries, one to pay back the medical bills and two to help Alexander.

"So, what's new? Got any juicy news?" Alexander asked for his daily security report.

"Nothing interesting. I am still working on Pallidus though," Camius slouched back on the chair.

"These things take time. Be patient and don't rush," Alexander advised.

"Yeah," Pausing Camius then said, "...yesterday the soldiers learned a few new stories about you, like how you don't sleep and how you like all kinds of women."

'So, that's what the family joke was about,' Alexander's mouth twitched a bit.

Then he finished the exchange, "Okay, I will not keep you any longer. You have a lot of things to do today and be careful not to catch a cold."

"\*Nod\*, see you tomorrow doc."

As Camius left, Alexander was greeted by a surprise guest who wished an audience with him- Menes.

"Any problem?" Alexander cut to the chase fearing something major has happened.

"No, commander everything is okay," Menes reassured and then got to his point, "Commander, I am actually here for a personal reason."

Here he paused to look at Alexander and then after calming himself down a bit said, "Commander, I heard Gelene is with you. Is it possible to give her to me?"

"Gelene?" Alexander was surprised by the mention of this unrelated woman but soon connected the dots.

She and Menes were both owned by Octavius, who sometimes the black woman to Menes to reward him.

He further remembered the woman saying 'how she made the strongest boy in the camp into a man.'

Alexander suspected the giant fell in love then.

So with a light smile said, "Yes, it is possible to release her. But tell me do you love her or do you want her?"

"Huh, of course, I love her and want to be with her." Menes seemed to not understand the question.

He even further said, "Alexander, I would owe you for the rest of my life if I could have her."

'Oh, you poor man,' Alexander ruefully lamented at his friend.

Chapter 94 Menes's Love And Alexander's Day

Alexander found himself in a bit of a pickle with the request made by Menes.

Because technically Gelene- the ebony beauty was not his, she was Cambyes's, as he had promised the girl her freedom to own property.

Though it would be hard to explain this to Menes, who might think Alexander was just making excuses, as legally, in the eyes of the law, Gelene was Alexander's property, as was Cambyses.

So, Alexander thought of a different plan, "Menes, it seems you have not understood my question."

"When I meant was, do you love her so that you will respect her wishes and let her decide if she decided to be with you? Or will you keep her as a slave? A sex object to vent your lust?"

"I...." Menes appeared stumped by the question as he asked himself, 'Do I want her as my willing wife or slave?'

Gelene was always 'nice' to him, so up until now, he had assumed she would just come when he called her.

"You think if you free her from me, from slavery that she will be so grateful that she will just marry you, right?" Alexander hit Menes's thought with pinpoint accuracy, which made the giant speechless.

"Haah," Alexander sighed after looking at Menes, "As your friend let me tell you some things you were not privy to."

"Haven't you wondered how I could know so many things about Octavius, things even you a close slave to him did not."

"Don't tell me...Gelene.." Menes seemed to understand where Alexander was going.

"\*Nod\*, yes," Alexander confirmed, "She has been working for me for quite some time. You can confirm it with Camius if you don't believe it."

"And she in return for her spy... cooperation Gelene has asked for many things, things like the freedom to choose the men she sleeps with."

Alexander was telling Menes in a roundabout way that Gelene had chosen Alexander as her man and not Menes.

"\*Plop\*" Menes, understanding this clenched his fists so hard that a few of his knuckles popped.

He was devastated by this as one of the reasons for his acquisition of power was to free and then marry that girl who had so tenderly shown him the best night of his life.

So, right now he felt as if nothing else mattered.

Alexander noticing the mournful look on Menes's face, a face that seemed to say that his heart just died, with great reluctance decided to extend a lifeline to him, "It seems you are truly in love with her huh."

"\*Sigh\*", what kind of a friend would I be if I let you leave my tent with that face," Alexander said shaking his head exaggeratedly.

"Okay, you win. After we reach Cantagena, I will break my word to her and give her to you, if you should still desire her."

This made Menes feel torn about if he should be happy about getting his girl or sad and ashamed about making his commander, nay friend, break his word.

And luckily for Alexander, the latter won, as among the people of Theocles, keeping one's words was seen as a sign of a human, and breaking it a sign of a beast.

Menes would gladly become a beast his love Gelene, but his heart could not bear to let his friend become one for him.

"Alexander...you...I," Menes stammered for a while as he found it hard to pronounce the correct words, but at last he regained his composure and said, "No, as long as she is happy, I am happy."

As Menes said those brave words, Alexandre did not fail to notice the sadness in his tone.

'Ah, first loves. So bittersweet,' Alexander ruefully thought.

But Menes was not done, "I hope you can treat her and her children fairly." He added as he was afraid that Cambyses, as Alexander's main wife, might bully Gelene and her children.

"Children? What children? Didn't you know Gelene can't have children? She's barren." Alexander exclaimed in surprise, amazed that Menes did not know this about his lover.

This was not a particular secret among the higher-ups.

"Barren?... She's barren?" Menes repeated the same words stunned, his mouth full agape.

He never imagined such a scenario even in his wildest dreams.

"Yea..why do you think she could sleep around so much and not have a single child?" Alexander pointed.

"According to her, the brothel she worked in fed her a poison that made her infertile. That was also why Nestoras paid so much for her, forty-three thousand tustas, and that's after intimidating the owner a lot. Because one could release inside her all day long without all the worry and hassle."

Menes stood thunderstruck at this revelation, 'So, that's why she let me finish inside her. And here I thought she loved me, hehe.'

In Thesos, usually, only couples and lovers finished inside, while casual 'get-togethers' finished outside.

And so, with this single piece of information, Menes's undying love for Gelene turned to apathy and even a bit of hatred as he felt betrayed by the girl.

"Thank you, commander, for telling me this, And thank you, Alex, for what you were willing to do for me as a friend, I will never forget it. But you can keep that slave." Menes now felt even saying the name Gelene revolting.

He then quickly excused himself, "I have lots of things to do, so I will see myself out."

As Menes stormed out, Alexander asked himself if what he did was truly necessary.

And the answer he came up with was, 'Yes, absolutely.'

This was because Gelene was an extremely ambitious and manipulative woman,

If she wasn't, she would not have been able to become a high-class courtesan within a mere six years and likely would not have survived till now.

So, Alexander, quite rightly feared that Menes would not be able to resist her charms and become a puppet between her finger, turning from Alexander's most competent captain to his most treacherous one as Gelene would push her 'husband' to gain more and more power and influence.

But although Alexander had managed to stop the worst-case scenario, he was struck with another bad one.

One where he was the one who had to deal with the ambitious, manipulative woman instead of Menes.

'Huh, so I somehow latched myself to that poisonous snake, eh?' Alexander lampooned at the thought of adding Gelene to his haram.

And he had to add her after his talk with Menes, as he would likely have to frequently be in contact with Menes at least for the foreseeable future, and thus would be vulnerable to any scrutiny by Menes.

Even if Menes detested Gelene now, Alexander was afraid of the mercurial nature by which Menes had decided to change his feelings and feared that once the black giant had calmed down he might change his stance again, especially if his girl was still available.

'Well at least she's pretty,' Alexander understanding there was still he could change, decided to look at the bright side of things- things like Gelene's succubus-like figure.

And that thought immediately produced some raunchy images inside Alexander's head, which, understanding it was far too early in the day to be thinking about such things, he forced down and got to work.

He first rechecked the various reports, re-reading them so as to make sure that he did not miss anything, redid the various maths, had breakfast, and then decided to go on a camp tour.

He first visited the Cantagenan camp, which was huge, bigger than all the mercenary camps combined, and witnessed the collection that was going on.

Literally, thousands of people were there, running through the rain and mud as fast as possible to get everything of value out of the Cantagenan camp and into theirs.

Along with them was a large number of armed mercenaries who were stationed there, to keep discipline and more importantly protect the loot.

Alexander had gotten the report that many of the Cantagenans and people from its sister cities were, predictably, not very happy with the 'reallocation of resources' being carried out by the mercenaries, and had attempted to stop them, resulting in even a few brawls, though no one had been killed.

Alexander witnessed mountains of fabric, carpets, and drapes, carts full of china, shiny piles of gold coins, and many other wondrous treasures adorn the Cantagenan camp and he drooled at the thought a significant part of that would be his.

He then spent some pleasant words with Menicus and Theocles, and then with some of the soldiers there, asking about their day-to-day and other mundane stuff.

Then he located Camius who was gathering the servant and slaves to be made into new units, asked him about his day and next went on the huge military drill that was taking place in the same camp and cherished the sight of how the formation using his reform of placing the captain at the back on a horse crushed the traditional phalanxes.

This was because the captain, now at the back and free from the burden of fighting, had better decision-making capability and the horse gave them greater mobility and an elevated vision, thus allowing them to make rapid, accurate changes to the formation, enabling them to more effectively open and exploit gaps in the opponent's lines.

Pleased that he had managed to convince the nay-sayers, he exchanged a few words with Heliptos and Petricuno, who seemed over the moon at this new tactic, and then Alexander moved on to his camp where the cavalry practices were happening.

Here Melodias greeted him and informed him of some three hundred Sycarian who had fled the battlefield had returned to camp once again and were teaching others how to ride.

Alexander praised Melodias for his quick thinking and after some pleasantries moved to his last destination, the Cantagenan training ground where he met Menes.

By the time he was done with that, it was already dusk and thus Alexander's busy routine ended for the day.

#### Chapter 95 Time With His Women

Alexander returned to his tent after work to find Cambyse sitting in front of her a small mirror, getting her hair combed by Mean, while she munched on some crackers and chatted with Gelene and Ophenia.

She looked like a real mistress of an aristocratic house, being served on hands and feet by an army of servants.

"Alex, you are back!" She greeted him with a huge smile as he entered the tent while Gelene rushed to him with a towel.

"Um, you been well?" Alexander asked casually as he took the towel and dried his soaking body.

It had been raining continuously the whole day, without showing any signs of letting up and Alexander got soaked while he toured the camp.

"Why didn't you use an umbrella? You are as wet as a sponge." Mean, with her usual temper berated him.

"Because my dear chihuahua, if a commander shows up to a battle in an umbrella while the soldiers are soaking themselves, it alienates them and spreads discontent around." Alexander was vigorously drying his hair.

"Don't call me that..\*grrrr\*," Mean hissed at her nickname.

Although she had no idea what a chihuahua was, she could understand from the context that Alexander was making fun of her.

"Hehe,...Talayin, the new color looks good on you." Alexander brushed off Mean's hostile looks and instead addressed Ophenia, who had changed from a blonde to a brunette.

"Thank you, master. Sister Gelene was very helpful," Ophenia differentially replied.

"Alex, we have decided that Talayin is too long. So it's Tayin from now," Cambyses informed him of the name change.

"Oh, okay." Alexander flatly nodded, unconcerned by this minor change, and asked, "Is the bath ready?"

"Yes, master, the tub has been filled with warm water," Gelene gestured with her dainty, chocolate, arms.

Alexander then took his bath and sat down to dinner with everyone else, when he noticed how his tent was becoming like Cambyses's one.

Various of her clothes were on the rake, there were her perfumes, make-up kits, mirrors, and combs on the table and it generally had the feel of a room touched by a caring woman.

"So, have you decided to stay with me?" Alexander smirked.

"You, don't want me?" Cambyses raised one of her eyebrows,

"Hehe, no that's not it. I just thought you liked your tent, with that kicking bag being your favorite and all." Alexander bit on a piece of bread slathered with butter.

The Cantagenans bought some good food with them.

"We will be moving soon anyway. So, I can go without it for a while. And Mean, Ophenia and Gelene can use my tent till then." Cambyses sipped some fine wine.

"Alex, when are you gonna marry the mistress?" Mean brought up the issue of marriage.

"After reaching Cantagena. Hehe, why my dear Mean? Do you want me to marry you too? Alexander teased the petite eighteen-year-old.

"Bah,..who would want to marry you, you pervert?" Mean had a flushed face as she spat out her usual venom.

'Ah, the classic tsundere! Overused yet so powerful' Alexander laughed in his heart.

"Hehe, this pervert assures you he can make you feel better than those thin fingers ever could. Just ask your mistress." Alexander vulgarly taunted the girl.

"Huh, only a beast like you equate those ...acts to marriage. Marriage is about love," Mean was surprisingly holding herself well against Alexander.

"Love? Haha, you should hear your mistress at night. She seems to love me quite a bit. Tell me."  
Alexander's smile here turned very vulgar, "Yesterday, Cam told me you licked herself clean down there. So how did it taste?"

"You ..you..you are so nasty. I never did such a thing." Mean was so angry and flushed at this baseless story as attempted to storm out of the tent.

"Alex, stop teasing Mean," Cambyses's sweet-voiced filled the air, calming the short girl down, "And Mean, stop getting so easily riled up by Alex. You know he likes teasing you."

"But, mistress he's too much," Mean pleaded to her mistress for judgment.

"He's your master Mean. And I won't hear any more of you saying you won't marry him." Cambyses was unusually stern with Mean this time.

"But...but," Mean was almost teary-eyed.

"\*Huh\*," Cambyses let out an exasperated sigh and then said, "Look, we both know you like him. So there's no need to be coy."

Then Cambyses threatened, "If you truly don't want to marry him, then fine. I will choose a man for you."

"Like Camius," Alexander could not resist commenting.

"\*Hisssss,\*" Mean only hissed and glared at Alexander at the mention of that distasteful man.

If Mean was a cat, her tail and fur would all be standing up by now.

Cambyses only silently ate her dinner while enjoying the banter while Ophenia observed the exchange with unmatched curiosity.

Seeing a slave so loudly and openly arguing and even cursing her master made her feel like she had arrived at a different planet, especially when the master in question was the head of a ten thousand men army and for the first time, a desire to know more her owner grew in her heart.

After dinner concluded, Alexander gave them the good news about his share of the loot and told Cambyses to go and personally verify things tomorrow.

"Treat yourself, Mean, Gelene and Tayin with anything you like from the stash. I'm sure they have will some good things," Alexander decided to reward his women.

"Hehe, hubby is the best." Cambyses chuckled.

Then after a few pleasantries, Cambyses hurried the others to leave, "Well, then, it's getting late. Everyone let's retire to our tents."

SheHer lower mouth was already drooling and she couldn't wait for her daily dose of vitamin D.

But Alexander interfered, "Mean and Tayin can go. Gelene, I have some things to discuss with you."

"Ohh," Gelene was first surprised at the unusual request, but then made a bold guess as she let out a sultry smile, "Anything for the commander."

Alexander's request also raised a few eyebrows, with one literally- Cambyses's, but ultimately no one spoke up about it, and soon the tent was vacated save for the three- Alexander, Cambyses, and Gelene.

Alexander then wordlessly sat on the bed, pointed to his crotch, and gave a single commander, "Suck!"

'Hehe, it looks like my guess was right. The little girl couldn't satisfy him,' Gelene sneered her heart as she flashed her sexiest smile, "Yes, commander."

Cambyses, on the other hand, was shocked to her core, "Alex, you...you."

They were just three days into their relationship and he was already tired of her?

She felt her body shaking and her legs grew weak as she wanted to rush out of the tent.

"Cam, Gelene is very experienced. Stay and learn from her," Alexander gave the order in a stern tone, omitting the usual 'please.'

"Yes, mistress, please stay." Gelene flashed a smile at the Cambyses, a smile that seemed to tell, 'He's my man now.' and said, "As women, we must worship our husband and satisfy all his desires."

"He's not your husband," Cambyses hissed at this brazen word, eyes burning with pure hate.

"Hehe, now mistress please watch carefully." Gelene only giggled,

'As I steal your man right in front of you, hahaha' She completed the second part of the sentence in her heart as excitement flooded her veins at the feeling of snatching someone like Alexander from literally in front of his girl.

Cambyses simply stood there with a face so frosty that the tent's temperature seemed to have dropped by a few degrees while her eyes displayed only pure animosity and loathing and her heart seemed to be shattered at Alexander's betrayal.

'Do your worst Alexander,' Cambyses swore in her heart with boiling venom as she decided to stay and witness this perverse play.

'Ahhh, look at that face, she's so cute when she's jealous,' Alexander did not miss the fumes of rage coming out of Cambyses and joked in his heart, fully knowing the misunderstanding she was having right now.

But he did not think it was still the right time to interfere, as his plan required Cambyses to genuinely express rage, fury, and indignation at him and Gelene.

'And it looks like I was right about her as well,' Alexander gazed at Gelene who was kneeling between his legs and gazing lovingly at him with her matt black eyes.

'She's truly an ambitious woman, with boundless dreams and aspirations and more scarily an iron will to get those. If I let her get her hands on Menes, it will be disastrous for me,' Alexander warmed himself in his heart.

Gelene was ready to start her service and with a, "Then please excuse me, commander," she put her hands on Alexander's breaches, and in one strong pull freed the chained monster inside.

"Oh, my commander..." Gelene let out a sultry gasp of amazement at the sight of the huge, veiny member that stood proudly upright, letting the world bask in its glory.

"Commander, this is the biggest, baddest cock I have ever seen in my life. It's so big." She whispered on his member, letting her hot, wet breath brush against the sensitive organ as she exaggeratedly flattered the size.

While it was certainly true Alexander was big, even quite big, he was nowhere near the title of being the biggest.

But all men liked to have their egos stoked, especially down there and Gelene noticed that Alexander too twitched and swayed under her honeyed words.

'Hehe, men are so easy and base creatures.' Gelene scorned in her heart as she blazed with raw ambition, 'Hmph, so what if you command ten thousand men? Here I command you.' she sneered.

#### Chapter 96 Gelene Into The Harem (R18)

Gelene then grabbed the large organ with her immaculate sepia left hand and with the touch of a professional, expertly pulled down his foreskin in one smooth motion, exposing Alexander's red, swollen glans out of its cozy home into the cold world.

And as it twitched and shook, as if angry at being cold, Gelene displayed her lasciviousness, "\*Chuu\*, Nice to meet you, little commander."

She placed a sloppy kiss on it, letting her thick, moist red lips caress the sensitive skin of his glans.

"Guh..Aaagh," Alexander could not resist a moan at his lewd play, his pleasure multiplied by the way Gelene's sweet voice was addressing his little brother.

'So, this is a pro?' Alexander's hip buckled at the brand-new sensation he was experiencing, even taking into both his life.

"Then mistress, watch how to really pleasure a man," Gelene could not keep the gloating hidden in her voice as she seriously began her service.

Her pillowy, red lips wrapped about the grand and started to slowly descend, her burning hot mouth enveloping the whole organ within a moist, fleshy cave.

"Oh, it feels good," Alexander moaned as Gelene made obscene sounds to signal her progress in eating his meat.

"Mmmmpch...Mnnnch..Chhbb," Gelene made no effort to hide her sounds, as she rolled her hot tongue around the head, while bobbing her head up and down the shaft.

"Shhlp...Shllp" Gelene deliberately mixed large amounts of her saliva as she sucked, amplifying the sound she was making and turning Alexander even more excited.

"Mmh, commander, how ish it? Feelsh good?" She talked with the whole thing inside her mouth, letting bursts of her hot breath hit Alexander's shaft and making him moan in joy.

"Yeah..its insane how good this is," Alexander filled his head back in pleasure.

"Fufuhu..I can feel your hips shaking under me..Mmmmch,."

"Shhlp..ahh..your spear ish trembling in my mouth, hehe...commander, you really like this, don't you..Omph..Mmmmch," Gelene kept up the relentless attack, sucking and bobbing her head down the entire shaft.

"Ohhh," Alexander was only able to shout joyous cries.

"Commander, let me show you something interesting," Gelene after a while said, her eyes swimming with mirthful, lusty intent.

"How do you like this? Mnnnch..Nmmmch,"

Alexander suddenly felt a warm, slimy thing with bumps on it poke at his urethra..it was Gelene's tongue!

"Yo...ahhgg," Alexander grunted in ecstasy as Gelene drilled into his urethra with her tongue.

She was firm one second, soft the next as she mixed up the sensation of her tongue's shape and texture on the hole with each movement.

The experienced girl was not just poking with her tongue, of course, she also kept up the suction on her mouth, coaxing more and more Alexander's clear fluid as she went.

"Mnnnn, commander's hipsph are shap..king even more..Chuunm" Gelene could feel Alexander's hole spazzing under her tongue like a girl's does.

"Ge..ne,..l..m ..gonna..agh," Alexander's pleasure-absorbed brain was being overloaded as he felt the urge to climax swell up in him.

"Yes, commander, come in my mouth," Gelene then started a fresh new offensive as Alexander's waves of orgasm started to build up.

A rhythmic sound began to come out of her mouth as she sucked even harder, rubbing the bumpy, moist insides of her cheek against his shaft, while simultaneously poking at the urethra with her tongue.

"Gelene, I wanna come on your face," Alexander expressed his desire to soil the russet brown beauty's oval face between panted gasps as he felt release was imminent.

"Okay, commander. Now, don't hold back and let it all out..Omp...Mnnch," Gelene turned up the vacuum one last time.

"Coming,,,arhg," Finally Alexander felt the orgasm hit in waves as he quickly pulled himself out of her mouth and sprayed his essence all over Gelene's cute face.

"Ah, commander's cum is so thick and hot, mmm," Gelene took the white, hot plaster without flinching a hair, only moaning lustfully at her new face over.

Alexander marveled at the white turbid fluid painting the dark brown canvas that was her face and loved it.

That's why he wanted to cum on her face.

Gelene was not satisfied with just being spray painted on as she scooped up some of the white goo and sniffed it, "Ahh..the smell...mmnn..this is the commander's smell."

She even plastered it on nose, making the most obscene face Alexander had ever seen, "\*Sniff\*..it smells so thick and rich....ahhhh..my face is gonna smell like jizz for days, ohhh."

This shameless, filthy display made Alexander's little brother immediately stand up again, proudly showing he was raring to go again.

"Hehe, the commander 's energy is boundless. You got ready so quickly, \*chup\*," Gelene placed another lewd, heavy kiss on his glans, forming a vacuum and sucking out all the fluid inside.

"Gelene, that's too much..arhg," Having just come. Alexander was super sensitive, and this violent attack so soon made his hips twitch and buckle.

Gelene sucked out all the remaining cum in his urethra and pulled her head back, but instead of directly swallowing it, she swirled the lewd fluids inside her mouth, making loud gurgling sounds as she mixed them with her saliva.

Then in a salacious act yet to-be trumped, opened her mouth to show Alexander its filthy contents, the gooey, lumpy mess swimming on her vermillion tongue, a little of it spilling over as she made a wide, obscene smile, "Ahh, commander, see...ahh.."

\*Gulp\*." she then swallowed the mixture in front of Alexander, making loud \*gup-gup-gup\* sounds as she coated her throat with the fluid.

"You sexy bitch, where have you been all my life," Alexander exclaimed and even though he had just come, seeing this he immediately got hard.

"Ahhhh." Finished drinking, Gelene stuck her tongue out to show her work.

"Come here," Alexander could not wait any longer as he fiercely grabbed her head and shoved his thick rod all the down her throat.

"Urgghh," Gelene's eyes widened at the sudden rough play, as she gagged at her huge organ hitting the throat.

She was having a hard time fitting it all in.

But Alexander was not gonna care about this as he started furiously humping against her throat.

"\*Slap\*, \*Slam\*, \*Squelch\*" Alexander's pubic hairs tickled Gelene's nose as Alexander rammed his member in and out of the hot hole, eager to sate her lust.

But soon, Gelene's experienced mouth began to adjust itself, as her lips locked themselves onto the base and her breathing turned heavy and ragged, as she intentionally let the glans hit the moist back of her throat.

"Chuupt...Chhhlp...Chhhbbb," She started making sloppy noises and moved her head by herself, taking the entire shaft inside her.

She also did not let her hands idle this time, letting her nimble digits greet Alexander's family jewels.

She lovingly started to fondle the sack caressing them under her warm palms as she rolled the soft, big balls between her fingers.

"Arh,..." Getting his most delicate part squeezed and massaged initiated grunts of delight from Alexander as he stopped humping and let Gelene suck him off.

Gelene worked fast and hard, taking the thick shaft all the way inside her narrow, moist throat, brushing the soft, squishy wall against Alexander's glans as saliva dripped out of her mouth.

"\*Cpht.. Chlpt..Chbbb," After a while, Alexander felt Gelene ramp up her ferocity more as he could see her throat contract and relax, telling him to come.

She took him to such a deep part that made Alexander feel like he had entered a completely different hole, a hole that felt like the lower mouth of a woman.

Soon the pleasure was too much and Alexander released his second load with a grunt, "Argh..I can't..coming,"

"Gulg...gulg..gulg.." The cum being deposited deep inside her throat was wobbled down by the greedy mouth, while Gelene voiced strained sounds.

"Mmmmmmm," she was clearly ecstatic about the hot load filling her belly because she opened her throat's entrance and placed her tongue underneath his shaft, pressing it hard against the meat and pressuring the tubes to empty everything.

Gelene swallowed every drop Alexander released and he could not help but let his sperm be coaxed out by her inviting tongue.

The erotic sight of a woman between his legs, having her mouth filled upto the balls with his hard rod, as her cheeks puffed up with his cum gave Alexander a supreme sensation of domination and satisfaction.

And at last, with all his fluids securely deposited inside the girl's belly, Alexander reluctantly pulled out of the heavenly upper hole.

"Commander, ooohhh, you taste so young and smell. I want more, mmmnnn," Gelene's face slackened, while her body shuddered in orgasming pleasure.

Gelene loved drinking cum, especially of young men as she believed it would help retain her youth.

"Slave, let me see if you have drunk it all?" Alexander then pulled her tongue out of her mouth and started rubbing his thumb on it, feeling the slimy texture rub onto his thumb.

"Yesh,,, ahhh...," Gelene obscenely opened her mouth wide, letting Alexander inspect the fleshy hole that had made him feel so good.

"Hmm, good, you have drunk it," Alexander could see no traces of the white goo, while a musky scent was coming out of her.

Alexander gazed at the drooling sepia-brown oval face, decorated with a curved little nose and thick, luscious lip and his eyes drew themselves onto her rosy, chubby cheeks.

Those cheeks were her most beautiful features and he could not help but play with them, "\*\*Slap\*," He slapped her right cheek with his dick and grinned, "You did well, now get up."

"It was my pleasure, commander," Gelene laughed lasciviously at being hit and then bowed.

Then she turned to Cambyses, and sneered a taunt, "Hehe, mistress, did you learn everything?"

Cambyses's face did not flinch an atom at this mockery, her face as cold as ever, like it had been set in stone.

#### Chapter 97 Convincing Cambyses

Alexander experienced a few moments of clarity, experiencing sage time after releasing twice consecutively.

And then he noticed Cambyses's face, wooden and cold, and Alexander feared she was reaching her limit.

'If I go on any longer, she might really stab me,' Alexander shivered a bit as she looked at Alexander with eyes so dark that they seemed to swallow all the light around.

"Gelene your mouth was heavenly. I will be sure to call you again." Alexander, with a bit of reluctance in his voice, decided to dismiss the woman.

Though he was a little down that he could not enjoy Gelene's most precious possession, her giant, marvelous breasts.

"Hehe, commander, you can call me anywhere, ..anyytimme.., day and night," Gelene's silky, melodious voice placed particular emphasis on the word 'night' as she bowed and showed herself out, but not before flashing Cambyses a victorious smile.

Once, the duo was left alone, Alexander turned to the stony girl, who looked like she wanted to eat Alexander alive.

"Oh, Cam, have a bit of faith in your husband, would you?" Alexander lightly smiled as he pulled up his pants.

"....." Cambyses was in no mood to talk.

"Haaah, it looks like if I don't explain myself soon, I might not have a wife," Alexander sighed ruefully.

"Or, I might not have a husband," Cambyses said in a freezing voice.

"Haha.." Alexander chuckled at his joke.

Because the only way for Cambyses to make herself not have a husband was to kill him as while women could be divorced, they could never ask for a divorce.

"Okay, tigress, here's the reason, Menes today came to me.....So you see, I need to make Gelene appear as my woman, at least for the time being, or Menes might take her."

Cambyses's stance softened to putty after Alexander's explanation as she too understood the danger of letting Menes fall under Gelene's spell.

In fact, the reason she was so angry at Alexander was not because he was sleeping with other women, which was a given with Alexander's status, but because it was Gelene he was sleeping with.

And that they were doing it so openly right in front of her.

"Haaah, you did the right thing. Menes will be eaten whole by that snake." Cambyses spookily sighed.

"But why did you do it in front of you?" She then asked with a tinge of anger in her voice.

Even though she understood the reasoning, she still felt her skin crawl when she recalled the kind of looks and smiles Gelene was giving her.

'That bitch!' Cambyses cursed in her heart.

"Because I wanted to let her think she has a better chance with me and than with Menes. And without seeing your real rage and sadness, she might not think she has a chance with me. And given how

ambitious that woman is, she will definitely switch to Menes if she doesn't think her prospects are good here." Alexander explained.

"It's good that you know that woman's true nature," Cambyses smirked, relieved that Alexander would not be taken for a spin by that woman.

She was afraid that Alexander, a recent graduate from the virgin academy might fall in love once he experienced the skills Gelene had to offer and be manipulated by the poisonous woman.

"You know, I am wondering if we did the right thing allying ourselves with that woman," Cambyses let out a sigh of exasperation.

"Without her, we would be dead. Octavius would have gotten us with one of his schemes," Alexander defended his actions.

"Yea, I guess...." Cambyses trailed off, lost in thought

"Don't worry, it's only a temporary thing. I'm working on getting rid of her." Alexander flashed a comforting smile at the down girl.

"Hmmm..by get rid you mean kill?" Cambyses raised an eyebrow as she turned to Alexander.

Alexander only gave her a thin smile.

"\*Sigh\*, don't." Cambyses made a request that made Alexander look at Cambyses in confusion.

He thought she would be the first person to gloat at her beheading.

Watching the all-knowing Alexander be puzzled, Cambyses felt a strange tide of pride in her heart, as she said, "If your dreams are as big as you say they are, then ambitious people like Gelene will always exist around you. What are you gonna do then? Kill all of them?"

"That,..." This simple statement made Alexander speechless as flashes of enlightenment went off inside his mind.

Yes!

Because he had tasted a bit of power, he was now beginning to think all problems could just be killed away.

'Someone who wields a hammer thinks all problems are nails' Alexander remembered a saying from his previous.

Thankfully he had an amazing woman beside him that helped him avoid becoming a tyrant.

It was as they said, 'Behind every successful man was a successful woman.'

Alexander's gaze turned soft and infinitely more loving at Cambyses, as he grabbed her by the cheeks and screamed, "Cam...you sexy girl. I love you so much, mmmnnn."

This sudden display of affection caught Cambyses off guard, who only passively took Alexander's love.

And after Alexander finally parted their lips, she thought Alexander was trying to bed her to make up to her for earlier.

'Hmph, I am not that easy of a woman,' Cambyses mused in her heart and decided to tease him a bit as a punishment.

"So was she good?" Cambyses asked with a smile that was not a smile.

'Is this one of those trick questions? Damned if you do, damned if you don't?' Alexander pasquinaded.

So, he decided to answer the question in a way befitting the kind of question she asked, "Cam, let me ask you, "How many years have you been practicing swordplay?"

"How's that relevant," Cambyses wrinkled her brow.

"Just answer me." Alexander urged.

"Umm, I don't know, seven-eight years," Cambyses found it hard to place an exact number.

"Right. Now imagine if Gelene- someone who has never held a sword in her life were to challenge you to a duel after just practicing with it for two days. Who would win?" Alexander made the analogy.

".....you are getting better and better at avoiding my question," Cambyses made a little pout, understanding the point Alexander was trying to make and a bit peeved that her little scheme did not work.

"Haha, with a large haram to manage, a good tongue is needed," Alexander grinned.

"Ohh, so you have a good tongue huh? A nice, long, thick tongue huh?" Cambyses's voice suddenly turned like that of a hungry succubus as she got closer to Alexander.

Then he lightly bit on his ears and sexily whispered, "Then why don't you use that silver tongue to please your mistress, slave."

"Kyah.." Cambyses giggled a little as Alexander immediately flipped her down, tore off her clothes, and exposed her bare ass.

He then raised her sexy fatty rump up to his face and noticed how drenched she was down there.

"\*Spank\*, you perverted slave. Why is your lower mouth this wet, \*spank,\*?" Alexander teased as hard smacks rained down on her round flesh.

"Ahhhh," Cambyses could only sensually moan as her heavenly nectar flowed even more at his play.

"\*Squelch\*, \*squelch\*, \*squelch\*" Alexander then directly inserted his first two fingers in her hole, which gobbled them up like they were nothing.

It was hard to believe at this was the same hole Alexander had a hard time getting just one finger in only three days ago.

"Did you get turned on watching your husband get blown in front of you? Haha, you filthy pervert, \*squelch\*," Alexander shamed Cambyses even more as he inserted a third finger and started scratching inside her.

"..." Cambyses's face went beet red at the last bit, as she could not believe she had found that act enjoyable.

"Oh, your insides just twitched, haha" Alexander laughed out loud.

He then mocked her even more, "I now understand why your face was so cold then. It's because all your heat went here, right?"

"....." Cambyses only buried her flushing face on the pillow too ashamed of her new fetish.

But Alexander was not going to let this fun play end so easily.

"\*Spank\*, answer me, slave," Alexander gave a mighty slap, while all three fingers curved up, hitting her G-spot.

"Ekkkkkkkk," Cambyses roared in a euphoric release as she swung her head back and rolled her eyes back, squirting jets after jets of clear fluid and turning the white sheets almost transparent.

"\*Spank\*, what's this? A grown eighteen-year-old can't hold her pee? \*Spank\*. This is the third day in a row, \*spank\*," Alexander was being particularly rough on Cambyses today.

He was a bit salty at Cambyses for not having a bit of faith in him.

Cambyses only moaned, groaned, and howled at these spans, her mind still reeling from the new kind of climax.

'What was that?' Cambyses asked her lust-fueled mind.

But Alexander was not interested in waiting for an answer as he slammed his organ inside Cambyses, ruthlessly pounding her and repeatedly spanking her for doubting her husband, till her olive-colored ass cheeks became as red as money's butt.

"Hubby, forgive..\*spank\*...ahhhh...no...master..have mercy..\*spank\*..on this lowly slave, ahhhh," Cambyses cried howls of rapturous pleasure as Alexander carved her hole into his exclusive toy, molding it in his shape.

And when Alexander finished unloading his third load inside her, she was a drooling mess, her legs spread out with a frog's, constantly twitching and spasming as streams of obscene white fluids leaked out of her leaking hole.

"\*Smack\*," Alexander slapped her fluffy ass one last time, loving watching it jiggle and shake.

"Uwwwuw," Cambyses only moaned languidly under Alexander's assault as she drifted into slumber.

## Chapter 98 Melodias Joins

Alexander woke up the next morning, got dressed as usual, and was very annoyed to find that the rain had not subsided one bit.

'Maybe I should start building a boat.' He lampooned and then slowly made his made to the command tent.

He received the usual reports, the highlight of which was that each group was to get around twenty-five million tustas and then, as he dismissed them.

As everyone was leaving, Melodias, strangely asked for a private audience with Alexander,  
"Commander, this war has destroyed my group and left me with a paltry one-phalanx formation.

Facing such realities, I have decided that it is no longer possible for us to act as an individual group.  
Hence I formally ask to join your mercenary group."

'So what's why you were so jittery yesterday?' Alexander finally solved the little puzzle.

Alexander was a bit surprised by the reason Melodias provided and probed, "Leader Melodias are you sure? With the twenty-five million tustas you got, you could build a ten thousand mercenary group."

"Hehe, commander, I don't feel like building anything anymore. All my men died because of me, all because of me." Melodias let out copious amount of sighs of regret.

'The guy's usually so cheerful,' Alexander would not have thought that the sharp, cheerful man held such heavy responsibility and guilt over the death of his soldier.

'Is he suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?' Alexander wondered,

"But this is war. You should know better by now," Alexander reminded him, with a bit of admonishment in his tone.

"Haaaah, I know. But two of my sons died that day. And I didn't even have the time to grieve for them." Melodias's voice turned teary as he confessed, "I have lost the zeal for this life."

"Then why don't you use the money you have to leave this life and settle down? With this amount of money, your family won't have to work for generations," Came the natural, next question.

"Haaah," Melodias seemed to be in a sighing mood, "Because I just cannot leave my men alone. Everyone that could lead them were killed four days ago. And I believe you are the one most qualified to lead them."

'His troops must be very loyal,' Alexander took note of that.

And then smiled, "Melodias if you want to join me, you will become an ordinary captain, and all your wealth- including the twenty-five million tustas will become to the group. Are you okay with that?"

"That...commander that is my personal property," Melodias formed a little wrinkle on his brow at this brazen grab.

But Alexander only smiled, "The twenty-five million was given to individual groups. Since your group is joining mine, naturally its wealth will belong to us."

"..." Melodias's wrinkle turned into a full frown,

He had thought, cleverly by his definition, that he could keep the entire stash while making Alexander foot the bill for the 'new soldiers.'

Alexander noticed the mercenary was having second thoughts and he being interested in buying Melodias, decided to sweeten the deal before he changed his mind, "Melodias, I very much value you and your men, and would love to have them in my team. So, I can offer you a 'signing bonus'."

"Signing bonus?" Melodias looked confused at the modern word, while Alexander explained,

"Yes, signing bonus. It means giving someone who starts a new job some coin. Like a present!"

"Ahha, I see," Melodias nodded understandingly and asked, "So, how much?"

"How about I pay each of the soldiers six months of their current salary- fifteen thousand tustas, your second in command two hundred thousand tustas, and you a million tustas," Alexander offered.

"Hmm, how...", Melodias wanted to test Alexander's limits.

"Sorry, that's my final offer," Alexander raised his hand to stop the little haggling procedure. "Take it or leave it," Alexander had a commanding tone as he held the absolute upper hand in this negotiation, Melodias needing him so much more than him needing Melodias.

"You drive a hard bargain, commander," Melodias made a forced smile and then nodded,

"Okay, you have a deal."

"Excellent, I will have Theocles draw up a contract by today," Alexander then got up and shook Melodias' hand, "Welcome, brother."

"Haha, thank you, leader." Melodias let out a relieved grin

When this news was announced later that afternoon, it caused a little disturbance among the mercenary leaders, especially Petricuno.

"What!! Are you sure leader Melodias?" Petricuno roared loudly, jumping up and down, and shaking his clenched fist after hearing the news.

"I have made this decision after deliberating over it long and hard, leader Petricuno. Please don't try to dissuade me." Melodias held up his hand to cut off the agitated mercenary.

'You think I care whether you join his group or not?' Petricuno screamed in his heart.

The reason for his objection was because he was ultimately unhappy at the even split of the loot.

His one thousand (1500) mercenary group was six times bigger than Melodias's two hundred fifty (250) and so they had essentially each got one-sixth of his income.

This did not sit well with the mercenary who had been hounding Melodias behind the scenes to try and get some of the pie for himself, as he reasoned that since Alcmene and Regias mercenaries with five

hundred men each did not get a share of the pie, why puny the leader of a puny two hundred and fifty get it.

But now all money was gone, safely inside Alexander's hand.

In fact, a reason that Melodias had hidden from Alexander was he was not confident in holding onto all twenty-five million tustas from greedy hands.

"Commander, the loot was supposed to be divided evenly among mercenary leaders. But now that there are only four of us, we should divide again," He demanded.

"Hehe, leader Petricuno you are being unreasonable. If one of us died, should we re-distribute our loot again?" Alexander argued.

"That...." The illiterate mercenaries' debating skills were clearly not good as he got stumped by this flawed logic and kept looking at Alexander with both anger and confusion.

"Haahh, fine. Since leader Petricuno wants it so much, let's have a vote to decide it." Alexander had a magnanimous fake smile on his face.

"All in favor please raise your hands," The only hand that rose was Petricuno's.

"All not in favor please raise your hands," He called as he raised his hand, followed by everyone except Petricuno.

"Well, I guess that settles it," Alexander had a gentle smile that masked his sly voice.

He had foreseen this eventuality and had paid the other two a million tustas to get him on his side.

'The game was rigged from the start, hahaha,' Alexander laughed out loud at the eighteen million he had made just like that.

"Leaders, this makes no sense. Why?" Petricuno could not wrap his head around the result.

In his mind, if the loot was re-split, everyone would benefit- except Alexander.

"The commander's argument convinced me. If I die will you take my loot? And if you die should we take your loot?" Heliptos sneered at the quick-tempered mercenary.

"Petricuno, we have decided and the votes have been cast. Have some self-respect," Menicus scolded the youngster which made the buff leader drop his head and sulk.

Alexander was also surprised by that he could buy the two leaders with just two million.

He initially offered a three-way even split, but Heliptos flattered him by saying he would support any of his actions and Menicus just wanted one million.

But, Petricuno was not the only one causing trouble as in the afternoon even some of his soldiers joined in.

When Alexander's regular troops came to know of the fifteen thousand tustas their new brothers were getting instead of their 'mere' ten thousand, a few started grumbling and asking the same as them.

This made Alexander fly into a rage few had ever seen, as even Cambyses who happened to be nearby looked at Alexander scared.

Alexander clearly smelled this was a plot to shake his authority and he immediately ordered Camius to catch the ringleaders of those spreading the rumors to be gathered in front of his command camp.

He also gave him several names, all Pallidus loyalists to be rounded up.

Then Menes was ordered to get the garrison in front of his command tent where Alexander began his very first trial over the group of ten.

He first addressed the crowd, "Some of you have been asking why you are getting ten, while the new soldiers are getting fifteen thousand tustas. It's because they have bought us twenty-five million tustas. And if you can bring us that kind of money, you too can get fifteen thousand tustas"

This produced a few chuckles and smirks.

Then he pointed to the group standing in front of him, "These men are guilty of sedition as proven by multiple witnesses (all paid by Camius.)."

"And now I ask Stratos Pallidus to administer twenty canning onto their bare buttock. And as stratos he can choose to pardon two people of his choosing" Alexander craftily gave that option.

'What! How did he know it was me?' Pallidus was a bit shaken at the mention of his name.

But was relieved that he could relieve his two closest confidants.

And like the fool he was, he took the bait- hook, line, and sinker pardoning two and leaving his other three loyalists under the merciless beating of the cane, which caused a deep fracture to appear between the six men.

The idiot never thought to say, 'I will punish them all equally as per the leader's command.'

Alexander only watched Pallidus excuse the two main ring leaders, from the side, ironically happy by this event.

#### Chapter 99 Capturing A Big Fish

Alexander introduced Melodias to his group the day he made the request to join his group and was greeted with open arms by everyone.

Alexander then promoted him to a stratos of the Cantagenans and transferred his unit to reinforce the thousand-men unit.

Alexander also asked Camius to secretly find possible replacements for Melodias, Petricuno and Helptos should the need to replace them arise.

And like that, while Alexander was busy performing his day-to-day work, he didn't even notice how dusk crept up on him.

As Alexander was busy tidying up for the day, suddenly Melodias strode up to his tent and shouted, "Commander, our scouts found someone important! Come quickly."

"Hmm, what's the rush?" Alexander slowly came out of the tent, intrigued.

"Let us talk on the way. They are at the medical camp," Melodias gestured.

"Okay, lead the way," Alexander nodded.

And so as the duo sped towards as Melodias brought him upto speed, "A few hours ago, one of our scout teams, the ones sent to the north, came across something unusual. They noticed a group of about twenty horsemen being chased by a contingent of Adhanian riders."

"Presuming that the only people who would be riding horses and be attacked by the Adhanians would be the Sycarians, they intercepted and chased off the riders."

Melodias then revealed a rueful smile, "It was only then they realized these were no Sycarians. They were in fact Adhanians."

"Adhanians?" Alexander asked confused. Given the drought had claimed a large number of Adhania's livestock, the only people who would be riding horses would be nobles and rich merchants.

So, why was Adhania attacking its own people?

And very soon Alexander landed himself on the answer as his face lighted up in comprehension.

"It seems commander has landed on the answer by himself, haha, as expected." Melodias noticed the look of understanding dawn on Alexander's face and confirmed his suspicion.

"The rebels are so still so close? Why?" Alexander had expected them to have vanished into the wind by now.

"Well, you can ask that answer by yourself. It seems we have caught the biggest fish of all," Melodias chuckled.

"Ptolomy?" Alexander asked boldly and incredulously.

"Hehehe, it seems so," Melodias nodded and smiled.

And as Alexander arrived, the crowd that had gathered around the clinic parted like the red sea, letting him be escorted right to the bed that contained a thin, gaunt man.

The man was clearly haggard, with sunken cheeks, dry lips, and weary eyes.

As the frail man turned to look at Alexander, he could be seen shaking and struggling to stay awake.

"Are you Ptolomy?" Alexander wasted no time as he asked the translator with him to translate.

Yes, the people of Thesos and Adhania spoke close but ultimately different languages.

This was also how the scouts managed to understand that these were not Sycarians.

And as a footnote, all the scouts that one or two translators with them.

"As I have repeatedly told you, I am Ankesh. I am the heir to the Zantum family in Leguna and I came to Adhan to secure some food from Pasha Muazz." He softly repeated, his voice rough and coarse.

"Heh, you came to ask for food riding on food?" Melodias sneered.

Logic dictated that if you were truly starved for food, you would kill the largest consumers of food first, like the horse the man was riding.

"A noble without a horse is not a noble," He tried to play it off as a pride thing.

"Well, where's the food then?" Alexander pointed out that they found no food with them.

"\*Sigh\*, we would not get any." The man dejected shook his head.

"Hmm, then why were you attacked?" Alexander asked the most important question.

"They were bandits!" The man shook his body in anger as he said the word.

Then loudly thanked, "Commander, I haven't got the opportunity yet to thank you for saving me. The Zantum family will never forget this favor," He excitedly added.

"Hmm, my men told me the ones who attacked you were around fifty horsemen. Tell me, when did bandits horsemen start running round Adhan, the jewel of the East?" Alexander sneered.

"....." The man opened and closed his mouth like a fish trying to breathe but no word came out.

Alexander had hit it right on the head- how could there be bandits rich enough to own and operate horses so close to the capital of the East?

"What? Cat got your tongue?" Melodias sneered at the man, mimicking how the man was flapping his mouth.

"Ahaaa haaa," Finally the cadaverous man let off a nervous laugh and said, "The commander has immaculate eyes. I too was surprised by this. Bandits so near the capital! Who would have thought."

\*Sigh\*" He then let out a heavy sigh, "This drought has destroyed Adhania. Even the capital is not safe."

This poor display of acting and coherent storytelling did not impress anyone, especially Alexander who only flatly looked at the man and said,

"Is the story you are going with? I had thought the man who dared to rebel against the son of Ramuh would be more...impressive,"

He uttered the last word with a smirk and noticed the veins on the man's twitch uncontrollably at this as if he was trying to bottle down the anger.

'Darm, plebeian monkey," Alexander's disdainful gaze made the royal's blood boil.

He was always accustomed to looking at others like that, and had never he thought would be on the receiving end of it.

"What I said is the truth commander," This time instead of looking directly at Alexander, the man hid his eyes.

'Timid, incompetent and a fool,' Alexander made his evaluation of the man.

Timid because the man tended avoided eye contact when talking to Alexander. He had expected a royal to look him directly in the eye and stare him down, something that displayed confidence and conviction.

Incompetent because of the lousy story he was spewing to save his hide. If you are gonna tell a story to save yourself, make it a good one, one that doesn't burst with the slightest bit of scrutiny.

And third, a fool, because even when he understood he had lost and his lies were exposed, he continued to perpetuate them, risking drawing the ire of his captors.

'How did this guy pull off a coup?' Alexander asked in bewilderment in his heart.

And the answer was because the rebel needed a figurehead, a symbol to rally behind.

And that someone needed to be of the royal bloodline and thus Ptolomy was chosen, who was not stupid, but also not the sharpest shed in the tool.

"We have also found a large, golden seal, what's that?" Melodias was getting a bit fed up with the lies.

"That's my family's seal, Please give it back. You will be handsomely compensated," The man seemed strangely agitated by that mention.

"It's not the royal seal?" Alexander smirked as he felt he had hit the jackpot.

If Ptolomy had stolen the seal in an attempt to carry on the rebellion, landing it in Alexander's hands meant he could issue formal orders in Adhania just like Amenheraft could.

".....Never..." The noble clenched out the words.

"Hmmm, okay, I believe you," Alexander looked at the man with a smile and the man looked at the sunny grin with a look that seemed to say that his lord and savor had finally come.

"Thank you....commander, thank you. I knew you were a reasonable and trustworthy man the first time I met you. I was surprised by how young you were the first time I laid my eyes on you and thought how could the mercenaries choose such a young brat, but I can see why they did it. You are almost a noble," Ptolomy grinned and nodded, feeling extremely proud at the diversion he had in his mind managed to pull off.

"Your flattery skills need work, Your Majesty," Alexander gave an angry snigger.

No one would use the words 'a young brat' and 'almost a noble' to flatter anybody.

"Wha...?" The unkempt man widened his eyes and mouth.

"A guy named Azaradm came to us to negotiate. Do you know him? We can just show him to you, " Alexander had a sly smile and a guileful glint in his eyes.

"Wha...." Ptolomy's blood ran cold at the mention of this name.

Of course, he knew Azaradm, Amenheraft's most trusted negotiator, and someone he had imprisoned himself.

'What's that guy doing here? Is it a bluff?' He tried to think of the best-case scenario.

Seeing even this did not break the man, Alexander attacked one last time, "You know, seems like a high noble pish posh asshole who probably wipes his butt with gold leaves kinda guy. Tall, has a mustache, tanned skin, and looks at you like you are a bug under his shoes," Alexander vulgarly described the man that walked as if he owned the very ground beneath it.

This last description was enough to break the man's delusion once and for all, as he confessed, "Don't hand him over to me. I will confess everything."

He then took a deep breath and his meek tone turned all of a sudden to that of an imperious, regal one as he introduced himself, "Yes, I am Ptolomy. And as the rightful king of Adhania, I thank you for rescuing me from the rebels."

'Able to spew such nonsense even in this situation, what a guy? A true politician' Alexander was half impressed at how the guy was able to spin the story.

## Chapter 100 Why Rebel

Ptolomy's formal reveal of his status, caused a little commotion in the medical camp, as many gathered around him, trying to get a glimpse of the 'god on earth.'

Alexander even noticed Mean, the four feet-eight-inch petite adult standing on her toes and craning her neck to get a look at the man.

But the bulky men smooshing her together made that action impossible.

"Mean, the king needs some water. Bring it here," Alexander thought he should fulfill the maiden's little desire.

And soon the girl came holding a pitcher, literally shaking with excitement as he poured the drink for the king, a grin so big cut on her face, Alexander feared it might never close.

"\*Gulg-glug-glug\*" Ptolomy was dying of thirst and drank three full cups before finally putting down the earthen cup with a satisfied, "ahhhh".

Alexander then signaled for Mean to leave, which she did a bit unwillingly, though not before leaving Alexander with a grateful look.

"Now, let us move to somewhere more private, Your Majesty," Alexander then gestured to the guards around to escort the failed rebel to his command tent.

"Leaders please make your way to the tent, I will join you shortly. Melodias too." Alexander urged them to accompany Ptolomy.

Alexander also ordered the leaders and Ptolomy to be served dinner, while they waited.

Alexander decided to do something else, as he called Camius who was nearby, and asked him, "How many of Ptolomy's people are there?"

"Sixteen including Ptolomy," Camius was taught to always give the exact number.

"Arrange all of them to be interrogated. And during the whole time make sure they are allowed not to talk to each other and collaborate on their story. The guy's a pathological liar and who knows how much of what he says will be the truth?" Alexander ordered Camius.

"Okay, but there's a girl with a high fever. Should we interrogate her too?" Camius asked for permission.

"What?" Alexander was confused by this question.

And then it dawned on him the misunderstanding taking place here.

Usually, interrogation meant beating people up, breaking their bones, and other nasty stuff, so Camius was asking if he should beat up the girl too.

"Noo, you idiot," Alexander scolded the man, "By interrogation I mean ask questions to them like: their names, age, family, home address, where are they from, where they were going, who is their leader, how they ended up here, etc. and write them down." Alexander gave a few examples.

"Don't use violence or hit them. Just ask normal questions and write down the answer. I want the full report by tonight," Alexander demanded.

'Again with the writing,' Camius lampooned in his heart.

If there was one thing he hated about working with Alexander was all the writing he had to do.

What Camius didn't know was that his hatred for paperwork was not singular but universal, a hate shared by all, across all worlds and timelines.

So much so that almost every working adult in the modern world could empathize with Camius to some degree.

But still, everyone did put up with paperwork because it made doing things easier and even Camius had found that out and so only grumbled an anemic, "..kay."

Then Alexander looked for Cambyses, who was caring for a little, nubile girl. The girl had an exotic wheat-colored complexion and striking bright red hair.

"I will likely be working late tonight. Be sure to tuck yourself to sleep early and don't pressure yourself." Alexander quite succinctly told her of his work schedule and after receiving an "Umm, take care," from the supremely busy girl, he excused himself.

When Alexander arrived at the tent, he found that everyone had finished their meals, evidenced by the large stack of plates on his table, and was chatting among themselves.

They greeted him warmly and after a few pleasantries, the real talk began.

"Now, mister Ptolomy, why don't you tell us how you got here? Let's start from the day the king defeated us," Alexander made a point not to call him king to lessen his importance and make him more amicable to opening up.

Ptolomy too noticed the disrespectful address, but what could a prisoner like him do?

"\*Sigh\*" He opened his answer with a heavy sigh, "The night Amenheraft won, we took fifty riders and rode north to reach Agnirat. The ruler of that city is the sister...was the sister of a loyal subject of mine and the plan was to take a ship to the Matrak province and meet up with Pasha Farzah."

"But, who would have thought that we would run out of food for your horse? The sacks we had bought ourselves, had only a few bits of food on the top, the rest were filled with stones. We had been sabotaged."

"And I was not just one person. Even among the fifty of my most trusted people were multiple traitors," Ptolomy gnashed his teeth as he said those words, hateful murmurs coming out of his breath.

In fact, the 'fifty most trusted people' was a misnomer as a lot of them sided with Ptolomy because of convenience and not out of loyalty.

They saw Ptoloty not as a good alternative to Amenheraft but as a better alternative.

Until the latter won two death-defying battles back to back within a few hours.

This made some of these people re-think their alliance, either due to convenience or because they were got fearing, and decided to sell out Ptolomy.

They did not directly kill or capture Ptolomy because they had taken an oath to be loyal to Ptolomy and could not violate it openly, as it would make them a pariah among the nobles, even if the action was sanctioned by the king himself.

So, they sabotaged and even leaked Ptolomy's whereabouts by leaving clear signs for the Adhanian trackers to follow.

After Ptolomy centered himself with a little pause, he continued, "On the second day, one of those ingrates managed to lure to a small ambush and even got close enough to kill Nulafzam...he's the one whose sister rules Agnirat," Ptolomy introduced as he ground his teeth.

'My man, you won't have any teeth by the time you finish,' Alexander thought playfully at the sound.

"We managed to escape that ambush but lost twelve men, and four revealed themselves as traitors," Ptolomy recounted,

"The third day continued with them hounding us. Constantly on our tail and never seeming to attack us, just trying tire us out, like a pack of wolves like they knew we had little food."

"We had tried to lose them, but they knew our destination and had blocked them all off. We were like caged rats. So, desperate, we thought of going south, but even then we were caught."

"That last ambush was meant to be the end of us, but it looks like the heavens still have a grain of pity in them for me." Ptolomy flashed a sad smile as he finished his story.

"Why did you rebel?" Alexander was curious,

And Ptolomy told them the various atrocities committed by Amenheraft's father and how so many of the nobles were all fed up with him.

"I couldn't let my dear Adhania be destroyed by the actions of a mad king," Ptolomy justified.

The horror stories told by Ptolomy, though a bit exaggerated, certainly painted the so-called god's blessed in a grim, hedonistic light.

Many leaders there left gazes of sympathy and even admiration towards Ptolomy for having the guts to rebel against a god.

But Alexander, though surprised, was not particularly moved by the stories.

Even if true, they would be only similar to the cruel practices of some of the kings of his time, like Vlad the Impaler.

Instead of focusing on the past dead man, Alexander decided to focus on the future, "I see, so what now?" He asked Ptolomy about his future intentions.

Here Ptolomy broke into a large smile as his tone did a complete one-eighty, "Commander Alexander, the heavens have decreed that we meet. I believe our fates are intertwined. Help me get Adhan, and I will make you my most trusted general."

"Ohhh. the owner of the world's most trusted general, how flattering!" Alexander said in an exaggerated mocking tone, "If you trusted me so much, if our fates are so intertwined, then why did it take me so much effort to get you to admit who you were? Was it all a test?"

Even Ptolomy understood sarcasm this obvious and simply made an awkward face while going silent.

"Well. if you have nothing more to add, then let's end here." Alexander had decided to dump this ticking time bomb and kick him out of the camp before dawn.

"Does anyone else have any questions?" He asked the other leaders present who shook their heads.

"Wait, commander, please. Okay, you don't have to fight for me, just escort me to Agnirat and I will pay you handsomely," Ptolomy was desperate.

"Didn't that Nulafzam die? Why should they let you into the city?" Alexander raised an eyebrow.

"No, they will. Because Inayah poisoned Beihrut, the captain of the royal guard. And she helped Pasha Farzah deliver poisons to the former king for years as his mistress. That's why he went mad. And that's why Amenheraft and her cannot exist under the same sky." Ptolomy revealed some earth-shaking news.

The news was so shocking that many leaders went slack-jawed at learning that all the atrocities committed by the king can be actually attributed to this Farzah guy.

Alexander too grew curious about this man and about Ptolomy's rebellion in general and so asked, "I think all of us would like to know how your rebellion Start from the first day the word rebellion was uttered within the halls of the royal palace."

Seeing all seven pairs of eyes zone on on him, Ptolomy knew they wanted a good story and sighed heavily as he lampooned, 'I should have become a storyteller instead of a rebel. My life would have been a lot smoother.'

But he knew he had to satisfy these overgrown children with a good story, his life was on the line, "I was always a pretty mediocre prince. Amenheratf far surpassed me in all categories- Prestige, martial arts, bravery, and academics."

He then let out a rueful smile, "So, imagine my surprise when eight years ago I got an invite to a private ball party at Pasha Farzah's mansion in Adhan. Those letters only ever went out to people of actual importance, and I never thought one would ever come for me. So naturally, ecstatic and over the moon at this honor. I accepted and joined."

Then his face turned a little bright as he seemed to recall happy times, "And this was the first of many times. Balls, banquets, and hunting expeditions, I was part of it all. The finest food, the softest clothes, and the most beautiful were all gifted to me."

"And slowly I was shown the corrupt side of the court, I was shown how the king abused and tortured people. How he taxed them and how his army bullied them. And how Adhania, the greatest country in the country was being pushed into abyss and ruin."

Then Ptolomy's voice turned high pitched, "We are god's kin yet there was a member so low and debase. And his place was so high in this mortal world. How could the gods allow it?"

Then his pitch lowered itself to a low octave, "I was mortified. I could see no way to help my beloved Adhania."

"And then Pasha Farzah approached me and said if I wanted to make a change, the only way was for me to become king. Only a king, a god on earth could help Adhania. And he said he was ready to help me." Ptolomy finished introducing his biggest backer.

'Fool, half the things he showed you must have been planned by him,' Alexander could only curse the good but naïve man.