

## **The Greatest Death in Conquest**

**By Steve O'Hara**

*Alexander is lying on his bed near death; all have left except for one of his generals, Atticus.*

ALEXANDER

“My death is near; I fear it is inevitable. Atticus, my friend and always my ally, come hither.”

*Atticus comes forward.*

ATTICUS

My lord.

ALEXANDER

“Please tell me, what did people think of me? What did the people in the streets talk about? Did they revere me?”

ATTICUS

If I should tell you the truth, you will not like it.

ALEXANDER

Tell me.

ATTICUS

You were once temperate once, but now you indulge the way the kings of Persia did. Once you cared less for the riches and fineries of wealth, but now, not so. Once, you listened to your generals, but not anymore. Their thoughts are daydreams to you. When your father was alive, it wasn't uncommon for a fight to break out. You rebuked your father in his drinking, but you do the same now. If you had listened to Aristotle's teachings, Clytus would still be here, and you would not be where you are.

*Alexander becomes angry with himself.*

ALEXANDER

Cursed is the drink of destruction! If only it did not cause so much turmoil. I see what it has done to me, my father, and Hephaestion. Hephaestion! If only you too were still alive, I would like very much to speak to you again. We were brought up together as children. If we had stayed to our ways of old

we would be together still. What has befallen me? Am I cursed? Can I do nothing right anymore? I am one whom the omens have forsaken. How I wish I could change the years since King Darius' death. My only purpose now is to live in regret. For me, there is no more joy. I conquered many lands, yet I cannot conquer my passions.”

ATTICUS

You seem to regret your whole life, is it so? I can give you no comfort for that.

ALEXANDER

“Must I despair?”

ATTICUS

You need not despair.

ALEXANDER

What must I do?

ATTICUS

You must believe that all great men are as flawed as any fool.

ALEXANDER

Yes, I see now what a fool I was. Many say I was the greatest general in history; others the greediest. I beg you, Atticus, remember me for my good qualities. Tell me, Atticus, is there some hope for me?

ATTICUS

I shall tell you.

ALEXANDER

Then speak.

ATTICUS

You are a leader, better than any other, you are brilliant in strategy, you are always ready to fight for your empire and stir the hearts of those beneath your command. You are the most talented military mind the world has known and have accomplished many notable deeds. These are what *I* remember you for.”

*Alexander interrupts.*

ALEXANDER

Thank you, Atticus. Your words do bring me comfort.

ATTICUS

Nonetheless, my lord, you rebuke those around you, believing yourself to be better.

ALEXANDER

Is it true then that I am a fallen man? I see I am the man Aristotle warned against.

ATTICUS

You have spoken honestly.

ALEXANDER

Then please watch over my kingdom for me. Do not let the next heir make the same mistakes as I. Make sure he remains prudent.

ATTICUS

If you wish it, I will.

ALEXANDER

“Please forgive my faults. My last thoughts go to you, Atticus, the only one left to care for me. I made few friends in life, but I see that you still look after me the way you always did.

ATTICUS

I look after you because you are a friend to me, and the battles we fought together are a memorial to our friendship.

ALEXANDER

Yes, indeed I remember all of our battles together. When I was young I could fight anyone and throw them down. I have killed many more than other legends in the history of the world. I remember the desert march, when we were on the brink of death, far beyond exhaustion, but we succeeded in the end. Yes, our battles and experiences together are indeed a memorial to our friendship. Remember me, Atticus.

*Alexander sinks back and dies. Atticus mourns his passing bitterly.*

ATTICUS

My lord, although you are now dead and cannot hear me, there is one more thing I must tell you. Even now, you have changed from the person you were. You looked back on your life, and realized your flaws. You begged forgiveness, and tried to turn others from the mistakes you made. How many men see their faults? The one sin that leads to all others is pride. You, my lord, certainly were no exception, as your death was brought about by your own sin. Today, you saw clearly for the first time in years. Believe me when I say, you are now more of a king than you ever were. You will survive in our memories as the greatest conqueror who ever lived. Rest now and feel the peace which escaped you in this world. Rest, Alexander the Great.