

Alexander on His Deathbed

by Felicity Sutton

ROXANA

Doctor, are you sure that he's dying?

DOCTOR

Yes, unfortunately your husband is dying.

ROXANA

You incompetent fool! There must be something you could do! He can't die yet! He can't. [She starts to cry.]

ALEXANDER

Roxanna? [Roxanna walks over to Alexander's bed.]

ROXANA

[cries] Yes, I'm here.

ALEXANDER

Stop yelling. You're being very loud.

ROXANA

[cries harder]

ALEXANDER

Hush now. It's distracting. [Alexander strokes Roxanna's head.]

ALEXANDER

Give our son my copy of the *Iliad*. I've kept it safe under my pillow. Tell him to treasure it as I have for it is my most favorite work ever written. Did I ever tell you about the time I tamed Bucephalus? Many people tried to tame him and yet no one was successful; however, that did not stop me from trying even though I was only 13. But I succeeded! I hope our son has the great pleasure of finding and taming a horse as fine, worthy and as trusty of a steed as Bucephalus. Taming him was one of my greatest accomplishments while growing up. And now that I am grown, naming the city of Bucephala after him is one of my greatest acts and is well deserved. After being faithfully by my side for the last twenty years, it was the least I could do for him. His tragic death at the battle of Hydaspes truly left a hole in my heart that can only be compared to the death of my dearest friend Hephaestion.

[Alexander groans in pain.]

I suppose this is the last time I'll be able to talk about my great achievements. Surely, I might have had more achievements had I been able to live longer. If Aristotle were here, he'd say I could have lived a long life if only I had more self-restraint, but I have no regrets, however, from living this way even if it has caused my demise. Once he has heard that I am dead he will have yet another example to give to his students of why self-restraint is important. [pause] Summon my generals! I wish to reminisce with them about the battles that we won and the all the cities that we conquered.

[Antigonus, Cassander, Ptolemy and Seleucus enter.]

Come! Let us talk about our previous successes and how great they were. I have such fond memories of all the battles I won and the cities that I conquered.

CASSANDER

Yes, my lord. We too have very fond memories of those times.

ALEXANDER

Remember my first battle? Nobody expected me to be able to conquer the Thracians. They all severely underestimated me and then when I took Thebes? I surprised them all.

ANTIGONUS

Your knowledge of warfare was most impressive which easily enabled you to win and conquer, your majesty. [Alexander violently coughs up blood.]

SELEUCUS

Your majesty, are you all right?

ALEXANDER

Seleucus, I am dying. Do not be alarmed by the blood which is death's mark on me. I have also the mark of one regret on me which was killing Cleitus. At Granicus he saved my life. I was not thinking rationally when I killed him since I was inebriated, so I cannot be blamed for that. Regardless, he did not deserve that kind of death.

CASSANDER

My lord, let us not dwell on those memories. Instead let us remember the time you cut the Gordian knot in half. That was an amazing feat which no one had thought of.

ALEXANDER

I must admit that was a great feat that I accomplished. But you all ought to leave my side now. For I am tired of talking.

PTOLEMY

Your majesty, we shall take our leave.

ROXANA

Doctor, go and examine his majesty.

DOCTOR

Yes, your majesty. [The doctor examines Alexander.]

DOCTOR

My lord, I think it'll be any moment now.

ALEXANDER

I am well satisfied with my life and now my greatest wish is coming true. I shall see Hephaestion and Bucephalus again. [Alexander dies. The doctor examines Alexander.]

DOCTOR

He has died.