

The Legend of Darius' Family and Alexander



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In ancient times, long, long ago the Emperor Darius ruled over the lands of Persia. Darius was a kind and forgiving man, as well as brave in battle. Many enemies had tried to plot against Darius, but he and his great commander, Memnon of Rhodes, defeated and stopped others from taking his lands and his position as leader.

However, all of this was to change! Darius was to encounter a new enemy and one that would be the greatest enemy Persia ever faced. Alexander, the great leader of the Greeks had his eyes on Darius' lands and was determined to make them part of his great empire.

Without any warning, the Greeks attacked! Darius and his army were very surprised, but quickly set about fighting back. His great commander, Memnon had a good plan. "Let's sneak behind the army and attack Alexander's lands". Alas, the armies did not follow the advice and instead attacked Alexander head on! What a mistake! They were no match for Alexander's skilled army and they quickly fled in panic.

The next day, terrible news shook Darius to the core. His great commander, the noble Memnon, was found dead! What had happened? Nobody knew. It was a terrible mystery that left Darius without the leader of his armies. What should he do?

Darius decided to get all his troops together and attack Alexander once more. Surely with so many men they would defeat the Greeks this time. They met at Issus with both leaders on the battlefield. Who would win? Even though Darius had twice as many men, Alexander's great army defeated the Persians.

Darius, in his war chariot, saw that he had lost. "I must flee", he thought.



Leading his remaining men, Darius fled the battlefield to safety, desperate not to be captured. In his haste he left his chariot, his bow and his royal mantle on the field. But even worse than that, he left his family and belongings, still camped at Issus in their tent palace.

Hearing the dreadful news of her husband, Stateira, Darius' wife, looked to the matriarch of the family, Queen Sisygambis, for what to do.

"What will become of us?" she asked the Queen "I fear Alexander will surely take our lives."

"Do not fear Stateira, we will plead to him and see if he truly is worthy of his name Alexander the *Great*. Calm the princesses, Stateira and Drypetis and the young prince Ochus and tell them to bow before their new ruler" Sisygambis replied slowly.



Stateira nodded to the Queen and did as she was told and together the royal family waited in fear for the Macedonian leader to arrive and decide their fate.

Tired, but elated from the battle Alexander returned to the camp at Issus, his pursuit of Darius having failed. To his astonishment, not only had the Persian king left his courtiers, palace tent and belongings but also members of the royal family! "What noble king would desert his family to the hands of the enemy?" Alexander asked Hephaestian, his dear friend.

"It certainly seems cowardly my lord", Hephaestian retorted. "What will be done with all that he has left?" Alexander pondered for a moment. "His belongings I shall surely take as my own. But as for his family? I would like to meet them and then decide".

"Very well" replied Hephaestian, and led Alexander and his soldiers towards the palace tent.

"Make way for our leader, Alexander the Great!"

Sisygambis looked anxiously at Queen Stateira as they prepared to meet their enemy. Their future would be decided by their actions now.



As they entered the tent, in all their finery, Sisygambis kneeled humbly before the noble man who stood tall and proud before her. "Oh, great Alexander, we surrender to you and your great armies and humbly beg for clemency".

There was a hush and then hurried whispers of horror, as the soldiers looked at one another. Sisygambis looked up and with terror, realised her enormous mistake. Her heart began to beat twice as fast and sounded like a death drum in her ears, for there, next to the man she had addressed stood Alexander! All of the courtiers, handmaids and servants looked on, worried about their own fate and that of their Queen.



"How could I have made such a mistake?" she thought "Alexander will surely have us killed now for such an insult".

Sisygambis began to panic and bowed once more, this time to the actual leader of the Greek army and not his friend Hephaestian. But as she started to speak, Alexander stepped forward and lifted her to her feet. With a heavy heart she looked up at the great leader, wondering what he would do and say.

"You did not make a mistake mother, for this man is Alexander too" Alexander stated, gesturing to his friend. Hephaestian smiled broadly and nodded to Alexander, honoured by the compliment, whilst all of the royal family heaved a sigh of relief with their fear turning to hope.

Sisygambis looked at her son's enemy with great respect and reverence. "What a noble and honourable leader Alexander is", she thought. "You truly are Great, generous lord. We cannot thank you enough for your clemency," she said.



Alexander smiled and nodded towards Queen Stateira and her children. "Good Queen, do not fear for your daughters and son. You will be well cared for in this time of war. I bid you good night". And with that, Alexander, Hephaestion and his entourage exited the tent leaving behind Greek guards to watch over the captive royal family. Sisygambis put out her shaking arms to her family and they embraced, safe in the knowledge that their captor was a noble and forgiving man.

