

FOR THE LOVE OF GEOMETRY

When he'd arrived in Makedonia to tutor the prince, Aristoteles had harbored one goal: please the king enough that he'd consent to rebuild Aristoteles's hometown of Stagiera. Philippos had razed it five years prior during his wars on the Khalkidiki. Aristoteles hadn't been against teaching the boy, but it wasn't his chief concern. Knowing Philippos, Aristoteles had hoped for at least cleverness in Alexandros.

He'd found brilliance, like sunlight off the sea, scintillating. Once Alexandros had realized it permitted, he'd questioned everything, a "fault" Aristoteles openly encouraged. What had initially been a job became a vocation: to harness this resplendent mind.

In some respects, he'd failed. Alexandros was Aristoteles's Dion of Syrakousai. Yet unlike Platon, Aristoteles had been a diplomat and spy himself, and so could forgive the prince for sometimes following the politically pragmatic instead of pushing through to the properly philosophic. Most of the time, however, he soared.

What Aristoteles hadn't expected was *the other*.

Had he opened his own school in Athenai where boys sought admission on merit, having two superb students at once might be expected. But to find it when handed a dozen randomly selected for the fortune of their birth alone? What were the odds? Tykhē had blessed him, so he mustn't squander her gift.

Special lessons for one had become special lessons for two, just not the same lessons. By their second year, when it came to geometry and mathematics, Hephaistion had pushed so far past the rest, it simply wasn't possible to retain him in the same group, like weighting down a prize racehorse to keep it from outstripping everybody else on the track. So Aristoteles had removed the weights and arranged for Hephaistion to have his own lessons, following the prince's.

Like Alexandros, Hephaistion also questioned and challenged and followed his own tangents born of pure curiosity. Aristoteles better understood why these two had been so drawn to each other, even if their tie had become more physical than Aristoteles may have liked. Yet he doubted the other boys could keep up with them, although the prince was better at grounding himself to mingle, sometimes disturbingly so. He could curse like an old soldier. Hephaistion

was more refined. The other boys called him haughty, but Aristoteles thought he simply disliked crassness in all forms, which might explain his attraction to the purity of geometry.

All the boys were competitive, however, and—Alexandros excepted—nursed resentment at Hephaistion's singling out. Deciding a contest was in order, Aristoteles gave them a theorem and a day to solve it. The one who did so would get the private geometry lessons. He'd harbored no doubts as to who would win.

By the next afternoon, not a single boy had an answer except, of course, Hephaistion, who was tasked with explaining it to the rest of them. He'd probably had it completed within hours of it being assigned. Thus, having proven his excellence, he'd resumed his lessons without further challenge, but was fast approaching a level past which Aristoteles couldn't lead. Only one teacher could guide him now: Eudoxos of Knidos. Aristoteles wrote to his old tutor from his days in Athenai, telling him about Hephaistion. Eudoxos responded: "*I've included something for him to solve. If he can, send him to me.*" No solution was included, which meant Aristoteles had to solve it first. It took him almost the full basin of the water clock in his office.

In that same mail delivery, and after two-and-a-half years, a letter arrived from the king, recalling the prince to Pella. Aristoteles had been expecting it. He'd had more time with the boy already than he'd thought he'd get. He'd also known the letter coming, as he'd met Philippos two months prior for a consultation. It had hardly been their first.

Aristoteles reported on Alexandros's progress to both his mother in Pella and his father wherever his latest campaign had taken him. For most of Alexandros's time at Mieza, Philippos had been away, returning periodically for festivals and to collect funds and new troops, his real reason for coming home. On several of those occasions, the boys had been recalled to Pella, and Aristoteles, of course, had returned with them. The king had always wanted a summary of his son's progress, and his questions weren't generic. He went over with Aristoteles exactly what the boys were learning, reminding the philosopher that Philippos read widely. He might carouse with his men one evening, drinking himself blind, then meet with Aristoteles the next over watered wine and excellent honey cakes, asking about Thrasymakhos's reality politics and Platon's notions of True Forms.

In that, he was not unlike his son in his ability to float between the intellectual and the practical. His early life had made him coarse, and sometimes brutal, but Aristoteles wondered what he might have become if he'd been sent to Platon in Athenai instead of to those thugs in

Thebai. Although, to be fair, had he not been taken by Pelopidas and trained under Epaminondas, he might not have survived at all. Philosophy wouldn't have been much use after the death of his brother, who, according to local gossip, had been rather too philosophic himself, requiring geometry at his symposia. Geometry hadn't saved him against Bardylis's Illyrians.

Aristoteles thought Philippos had the intelligence Perdikkas had only feigned. He'd never say so to the king, who'd genuinely loved his older brother, but the death of Perdikkas had been the best thing ever to happen to Makedon.

In any case, in the spring of the year of the 110th Olympiad, as soon as the hill passes were open, Philippos was back in Pella to deal with Demosthenes's vituperation down in Athenai, and prepare a new campaign. Amid other business, he found a man in Mieza who, for two gold coins, would give them a private room and dinner, and say nothing about the identity of his guests. Aristoteles was shown into a rather run-down *andron*, its painted plaster walls cracked, but no doubt discretion was more important than décor.

The king was waiting.

After an exchange of welcome kisses, both settled onto couches and accepted food from the servers who, Aristoteles noted, were Thracian. "They can't understand a word we're saying," Philippos explained. "So don't be afraid to speak plainly. Now, I'm planning to leave again by late summer, to join Parmenion and Antigonos who are marching the army to Perinthos. I could be gone for a year or more. Is he ready?"

Aristoteles didn't have to ask 'ready for what'? He sipped the wine; it was vinegary. "I think he might be."

"Might?"

"No, he is." Aristoteles sighed. "I've done what you wanted, Philippion." Few, these days, got to use that nickname. "I've educated a king, He's young, he's rash sometimes, but he's gifted. Three years ago, when you hired me, did you know what you were sending me?"

"I had an inkling. But first, I had to pry him out of the grasp of Olympias's kin. Leonidas made him hard of body, but I needed you to stretch his mind, not unlike what your father did for me, before Thebai. I can still stitch up a sword cut."

Aristoteles chuckled. "But do you remember all the body's bones?"

"No. Well, probably a goodly number, but not all. Other matters have crowded out those lessons. But he opened my imagination."

The king took a sip of the wine, then spat it out. “*Herakleis!* I need to give that man more coin. This is awful.” He put the cup back on the little table in front of his dining couch and opted instead for a spit of grilled pork. “So, if you think he’s ready—”

“Ready enough.”

“After his initiation, I’ll bring him back and put him under Antipatros while I’m in the Bosphoros.”

“He’s ready for that, especially on a lead-line.” Aristoteles leaned forward on an elbow. “I want to beg a favor.”

“One bigger than rebuilding Stagiera?”

“No,” Aristoteles replied. “Rather less, in fact. I’d like you to release Hephaistion Amyntoros from his vow of service to you.”

Philippos appeared bemused. “Whatever for?”

“I want to send him to Eudoxos, at his school in Knidas. The boy’s brilliant, and about to sail past the horizon of my mathematical skills. I knew Eudoxos in Athenai. He taught the school while Platon was in Syrakousai. I’m not ashamed to admit he excels me in numbers, although I like to think I excel him in research and applications, not to mention politics, for which he has neither interest nor skill. But geometry? He’s the most gifted mathematician of our age. Hephaistion deserves such a teacher.”

Philippos leaned back on his couch and scratched his beard. He didn’t answer. Nervous and unaccustomed to the feeling, Aristoteles blundered on. “You don’t need him as surety for his father’s good behavior. Amyntor isn’t the sort to plot rebellions, and Hephaistion...he’s a rarity. I want to cut him free to fly.”

For several long breaths, the king remained silent. Then he grunted, which could mean any number of things. Kings were, by nature, intransigent and unpredictable, even with those they’d known as boys. “On the one hand, it might be good to be rid of him. He’s a problem in the Pages.”

“How so?”

Philippos returned to his dinner, pulling a chunk of pork off the spit and chewing it. Finally, he said, “Too much of his own mind to take orders without questioning them. It sets a bad example, and boys like that get themselves killed. His brothers were no different, which is why they’re all dead. Even three generations out, Amyntor is still Athenian. He teaches them to

think, not obey.”

Aristoteles bit his tongue, but it wagged anyway. “I’d have done the same.”

Philippos pointed at him with the spit. “Which is why I’m not surprised you’re asking me to give him to you. Of course you like him. He’s the worst of that lot.” He took another bite, adding after he’d swallowed, “Someday, he could make a fine officer precisely because he *can* think...if he survives until then. So, sending him to Eudoxos might be the better option. And I’m sure Amyntor would agree to it.”

“Good. I’ll talk to him—”

“*But*. The boy’s going to refuse.” Philippos turned his head slightly so his good eye was on Aristoteles. “He’s in love, Aristo. You may as well try to pry a barnacle off of a boat. It might be good for the boat, but it’ll kill the barnacle.”

“Who’s the barnacle and who’s the boat?” His question was more rueful than angry.

Abruptly, Philippos set down the meat spit and pushed to his feet, pacing. Aristoteles wondered if he knew his son did the same when thinking. “I wanted Alexandros to have what I didn’t. Time to grow up. A good education. Real friends. Not to be afraid every blasted moment that somebody might stab him or poison his supper.”

Aristoteles struggled to contain horror at Philippos’s flat delivery. The king was stating a fact, not seeking sympathy, yet Aristoteles had seen enough, and remembered enough. Makedon under his father Amyntas, and especially after, had been ill-managed madness.

“While, in theory, I’m not opposed to your request to send Amyntor’s brat to Knidos, and it might solve some discipline problems in the Pages, I doubt he’ll go. Nor will I make any effort to encourage it, for one reason.” He stopped to look back at Aristoteles. “Hephaistion will guard my son with his last breath and never seek anything in return because he’s as unambitious as his father. He loves well. I never had that. I won’t take it from Alexandros.”

His grin was sudden and unexpected. “So you have my permission to try to steal him from me. And if he *asks*, I’ll let him go. But in this, Aristo, I won’t help you. My son needs a Molossian guard dog. Hephaistion’s a big boy, good with a sword, and clever. He might be a pain in the arse, command-wise, but I’ll keep him by Alexandros if I can.”

“You do realize what they’re doing—”

“I don’t give a shit what they’re doing. I never bought that part of Platon. They can fuck like hares for all I care. Amyntor’s son will protect mine, and that’s what matters to me. Steal

him if you can, old friend, but I doubt you'll succeed."

He winked with his good eye, then exited the *andron*. He'd drunk no more of the sour wine nor finished his meal.

Aristoteles sipped from his own cup, thinking. He'd never backed down from a challenge, even from a king. Especially from a king. He'd have to approach this carefully, but the game was on.

"Knidos?" Hephaistion asked, astonished. "You mean...in Karia?"

"Yes. I might even travel with you; I've not seen Eudoxos in years. I sent him several of the theorems you solved for me, and he sent back this." Aristoteles handed over a small, folded bit of papyrus.

Hephaistion unfolded it, reading aloud:

"They say magnitudes are of equal ratio, first to second and third to fourth in the case that any equimultiples be taken of the first and third, and any equimultiples of the second and fourth, when the first equimultiples all exceed, or are all equal to, or all fall short of, the latter equimultiples respectively, in their corresponding order. What does this describe?"

Aristoteles could see his mind working, and he muttered, "We need to reframe this. Four original numbers, with differing variables, but the relationship has to hold, whatever the variables might be...."

Sitting down at a table, he kept muttering, but now it was too low for Aristoteles to hear. Unlike Alexandros, Hephaistion preferred to keep his train of thought to himself whilst working through things. Some time went by as he scribbled on a wax diptych, but Aristoteles was used to waiting. He'd idly set his water clock when Hephaistion had begun, out of curiosity.

Only about half the water was gone when Hephaistion set aside his stylus and sat up, holding the dyptich at arms' length to frown at it. "This is a definition of proportions. Or maybe amplifications?"

"Both." Aristoteles was astonished. "You recognize it so quickly?"

"Yes." He seemed baffled, but Aristoteles only leaned back in his chair and sighed.

"And that is why you must go to Knidos, Hephaistion. It took me almost twice as long to

puzzle that out.”

“*Really?*” The boy’s obvious astonishment undercut any accidental insult.

“I’m not, at heart, a *mathematikē*, not truly. You are. Eudoxos is. He can open your mind in ways I’ve only begun to do. He said, if you understood that, to send you to him. He’ll teach you mathematics, of course, but also astronomy. He was my teacher once.”

“I know; you told us.”

The boy rose, walking around as if in a fog. He still held the little square of papyrus.

“What do I know about going to a real school?”

Aristoteles snorted. “Where do you think you’ve been for two years?”

Realizing how that had sounded, Hephaistion blushed. “I meant no offense. But we didn’t come to you having to prove ourselves. You were given us and didn’t have much choice.”

“True. But I’m confident you’d gain admittance to study with Eudoxos even without my letter of recommendation.”

“You recommended me?”

Aristoteles almost laughed. For all the boy’s pretense at jaded skepticism, at heart, he could be sweetly naive. “How do you think you got that little slip of papyrus?”

“You just said you sent him my theorems.”

“With a letter of recommendation that he take you on as his student. He sent back your entrance examination, which you solved faster than I did.”

“Oh.” He looked stunned, like a bull hit by a hammer before its throat was cut for sacrifice. “But they’ll call me *ágroikos*.” Farmboy.

“Eudoxos won’t. When he first arrived in Athenai, he was so poor, he could afford only a room by the docks, and had to walk every day into the city to hear Platon lecture. You’re neither a farmboy nor poor like he was, so don’t pretend to be. You have advantages he never had.”

Hephaistion had the good grace to look abashed. “Again, I meant no offense. I just assumed—”

“What have I tried to teach all of you for the past two years? Don’t assume...”

“...find the evidence to prove it. Yes, sir.” He stared at Aristoteles. “Eudoxos really wants me to study with him?”

“You solved his puzzle. Yes, he’ll want you.” He hesitated, then added, “Son, you have no idea how very good you are. All you’ve had for comparison has been here. But I’ve been to

school with several great minds. I'm not flattering you to say you can match them."

Hephaistion unfolded the papyrus again, reading over the thick lines of Eudoxos's hand. Then he sat down, his brows drawn together. Aristoteles let him think. He'd baited the hook well and the fish had bit. Now he waited for it to feel the piercing in its mouth.

"What about Alexandros? And my oath to the king?"

There it was.

"Philippos has promised that he'll release you from your oath for this; you need only ask him. But Alexandros won't be going. He's prince; his father has plans for him here. Of course you can correspond while you pursue your studies. You needn't think on this as any sort of permanent separation. You can return in a year or two."

"A year or two!"

"That isn't so long, in the course of things." It wasn't, although to boys their age, it must seem like an eternity.

Aristoteles didn't add that, once he'd begun his studies with Eudoxos, Hephaistion probably wouldn't want to return to Pella to play at war. He wasn't meant for battle; he was meant for *maths*. "In any case, you needn't decide just now. I've already sent your father a letter of proposal. He'll have to agree, of course. There will be a fee."

Hephaistion might be a natural, but he was also nobility. He could pay his way, whereas other boys could not. Eudoxos would most certainly charge a fee so he could continue to teach other scholars like himself, who had no wealth. To these newly rich Makedonians, Eudoxos's teaching fee and the cost of room and board was negligible.

"I...I'll consider it," Hephaistion said finally.

It was the best Aristoteles could hope for. He hadn't said "no" immediately.

"We won't be leaving for Pella for another month. You've plenty of time. And you should write back to Eudoxos." That was the best lure of all; let the old man talk to Hephaistion directly, mathematician to mathematician.

Now, he had another conversation to conduct.

Getting an unheralded visit from Philippos was not something Amyntor would have

expected. But there the king was, dismounting just outside the main gate of Amyntor's villa on the edge of Europos.

"Philippos," Amyntor greeted him, noting that he was sparsely attended, meaning this wasn't an official visit. "Did you come to negotiate for additional mounts?"

"We can. It's not why I came, but I need them. Two hares in one bag?"

"What's the other hare?"

"Have you received a letter from Aristoteles?"

Ah. "Yes. What of it?" Amyntor crossed his arms and faced the king as Philippos walked up to him where he stood by the bearded herm with its jutting phallus that guarded the house from ill-will and the evil eye. The sun directly overhead cast their shadows short on the packed orange earth of the front garden. Bees hummed and danced around the lavender and thyme, rosemary and oregano, basil and dill that Berenikē grew in plots, to make sachets and other charms.

"Are you willing to let your boy go to Knidos?"

"I'm considering it. If he wants to go." Aristoteles's letter had been a wee bit too flattering, and now, here was the king. Something was up. "Why this sudden interest in my son's further education? I thought he was vowed to your service?"

Philippos tilted his head to scrutinize him with the good eye. "He is. Aristoteles asked if I'd release him from it, to travel to Knidos in order to study with this mathematician."

"Did you?"

"I will. *If* he asks."

Interesting emphasis. Amyntor gestured for Philippos to follow him inside. "Come and have some wine."

The royal Bodyguard didn't follow, simply took up stations to either side of the front entry next to the herm. House servants studied the guest with curiosity, but had little reason to recognize the middle-aged man in a sweaty, madder-red tunic as their sovereign. Philippos was no regular visitor, and like Amyntor, preferred simplicity. Amyntor might have liked him, if only he'd stay out of unnecessary wars that led to the unnecessary deaths of boys who thought it all glamorous, led by older men who wished they were still those boys.

Once they were comfortably settled on a pair of couches in Amyntor's *andron*, a servant brought good Chian, suitably watered; it was, after all, midafternoon. "Why don't you want

Hephaistion to go to Knidos?” Amyntor began.

“Do you want him to go?”

“Don’t deflect. If he aspires to, I’ll pay his student fees. If he doesn’t, I won’t push him. Why do you care?”

“I’d think you’d prefer he stay in Makedon, given that you didn’t even want him to join the Pages in the first place.”

Amyntor eyed the king, trying to discern his game, but Philippos was far too good at rolling the dice to give away his intentions. “Not wanting him to join your Pages was about keeping him out of combat. I doubt he’ll be fighting with more than a quill in Knidos.”

“You’d turn him into a philosopher? He’s got a gift with a sword. You do realize he’s been placing increasingly higher in each Single Combat at the Hetairadeia?”

“And the first one nearly killed him. If he wants to become a *mathematikē*, I won’t oppose it. But I also won’t strong-arm him one way or the other.”

“Don’t you think he’d prefer to stay with Alexandros? I assume you approve of the fact that your son won a prince?”

And now they were finally coming to it. “And I assume *you* approve of the fact your son won a completely devoted lover who’d lay down his own life for him. I understand your real concern, my king.”

Philippos toasted Amyntor. “You’re a political idiot, Amyntor, but you understand some things. They love each other. They should be allowed to. I didn’t have that.”

Amyntor narrowed his eyes. “Appealing to sympathy is no more effective.” He set down his cup and leaned forward. “Let’s be clear. Your son is an admirable young man with whom my son is completely besotted. I’ve no issue with that. But if Hephaistion asks for a few years to study his other love, geometry, I’ll support it. That’s his choice, however. Now, do you want to negotiate for horses?”

Philippos laughed but shook his head. “You’re a hard bargainer. Fine, let’s move on to horses and see if I do any better.”

“Have a seat,” Aristoteles invited in the prince. It was their usual lunch lesson, but the

first since Alexandros had received his recall from Philippos.

“You had a letter from my father too?”

“Yes, son.” He didn’t add that he’d known a few weeks in advance. “How do you feel about returning to Pella?”

Sitting down in the chair beside Aristoteles, Alexandros pursed his lips, expression torn.

“You’re allowed to be excited,” Aristoteles whispered, as if in confidence.

It made Alexandros laugh. “All right. I am, a bit. It isn’t that I’ve not enjoyed our time here.”

“But you want to grow into what I came to prepare you for.” Aristoteles nudged his arm. “That was the goal all along. I’m glad we had as much time as we have.”

The boy grinned, blushing a bit. He was still so easy to flatter; it worried Aristoteles.

“I’m glad, too,” Alexandros replied. “Do you know what my father has in mind for me next?”

Aristoteles did, but wouldn’t spoil the surprise. “That’s with the king. But I wager you ready for any task he sets you.”

“Really?”

Alexandros’s countenance was painfully open and hopeful of praise. Even now, after more than two years, insecurity from the criticism that had stunted him when he’d first arrived could resurface in a flash. It hurt Aristoteles’s heart. “Yes, Alexandros. Really. You’re ready.”

Alexandros lowered his eyes, an act of respect from student to teacher. “Thank you.”

“You’re most welcome. Now, as we still have a month, let’s move on to critical matters concerning ethical rule. As king, you’ll be required to make decisions that affect hundreds, even thousands, up to and including their life or death. What principles should guide you in such cases? These are things to consider when cool-headed, before being forced by circumstance to choose a course of action where passions might intervene.”

The prince tipped his head. “We’ve played these games before, but as I said then, how could I know what to do until I’m actually in that situation? There could be all sorts of variables.”

“It’s an exercise, Alexandros, no less than what you perform in the *palaistra* or on the practice field. None of that is combat, but doesn’t it help you in the heat of battle? Reviewing difficult theoretical situations can likewise help when you inevitably face the real ones.”

He shifted slightly in his seat. “Before we begin down that path, however, I’d like to

discuss another matter concerned with endings. And beginnings.”

Alexandros’s expression was only curious.

“As you’re well aware, Hephaistion’s ability at mathematics is beyond exceptional.”

“Yes, I’d thought to ask Father if he might assign him to requisitions and supply. It would seem to suit him.”

“What if I could offer him something far better?”

Puzzled, the boy tilted his head in place of a verbal question.

“What if the best mathematician living were to invite Hephaistion to study with him?”

Alexandros sat back. “What?”

“Eudoxos would like Hephaistion to come to Knidos. He solved Eudoxos’s test question faster than I did. I can’t teach him anymore. But Eudoxos can guide him on the journey he was meant to take.”

The prince appeared gobsmacked. “Knidos is in Karia!” Southern Asia Minor.

“Yes, it is.”

“He wants to go?”

“He said he’d consider it. I’m sure your opinion will count enormously in his deliberations, so I wanted to speak with you, as well. Explain what this opportunity means.”

The boy exploded to his feet, pacing all over Aristoteles’s office. “What would I do without him?”

“What you’ve always done; you’re perfectly capable. And this is not a permanent arrangement, just a year, maybe two.” Aristoteles downplayed the future. “Can you love him enough to give him up and let him pursue his own gifts? He’s extraordinary. I think you know that.”

On the one hand, Aristoteles felt guilty for playing on the strings of the prince’s natural affection and generosity. Yet on the other, he was determined that Hephaistion have this chance. Eudoxos was getting on in years. Who knew how long any man had? If Hephaistion went now, and were to stay, he might even rise to direct Eudoxos’s school one day.

The prince kept pacing, fear and anguish etched into the lines of his face. “I need him, but of course I love him. I want what’s best for him. He should go to Knidos, if Eudoxos asked for him. I recognize it’s a singular honor. I just....” He trailed off and *looked* at Aristoteles, his heart in his mis-matched eyes. The blue one seemed very bright, perhaps from a thin film of tears

unshed.

“It would be a great sacrifice on your part. I understand that. It would be one on his, as well, to be away from you. He won’t want to go. But here, a man shows mastery.” *Sophrosunē*. “To put aside childish desires in favor of what is best, the superior good. And again, you needn’t think on this as permanent. It’s not uncommon to study for just a year or two.” He was fudging, but once apart, surely distance would cool their ardor. True friendship would remain.

Aristoteles leaned forward. “Can you let him go? For love? Even if he insists that he should stay? Can you set him free to fly like the eagle he is?”

The prince paused in his pacing, staring down at the hook rug covering the floor of the office. Finally, he gave a short, sharp nod. “I’ll tell him to go. He’s meant for this.”

“Indeed, he is.” Aristoteles agreed.

The way Alexandros regarded him told Hephaistion that he already knew what Aristoteles had suggested. Anguish sketched his features, but resolution too. Resolution to what, Hephaistion didn’t know. Nor had he made up his own mind. He wanted to go, wanted it desperately, even as he couldn’t bear the thought of being apart from Alexandros.

They met in their room after their private lessons with Aristoteles. It was the afternoon rest. Most of their schoolmates were sleeping, or at least doing something quiet. When Hephaistion returned from his lesson with the philosopher, he found Alexandros sitting on their shared double couch, just staring at the floor. He looked up as Hephaistion entered, and Hephaistion knew he knew. “Aristoteles told you what he proposed to me.”

“Yes. Why didn’t you say anything?”

“He just proposed it yesterday.”

“That’s why you tossed and turned all last night. But why didn’t you *say* anything? Why’d I have to hear it from him?”

Upset roiling his belly, Hephaistion looked away. “*Oa!* I didn’t know how to tell you. I’ve been trying to wrap my mind around it. Eudoxos of Knidos wants *me* for a student. But you couldn’t come with me.”

He heard Alexandros’s feet hit the wooden floor as he slid off the couch, and glanced up

in time to catch his friend's embrace. Alexandros's arms wrapped around his ribcage as his own enclosed Alexandros's shoulders, his face in the prince's coarse, curly hair. It smelt of the sweet oil he put in it, to keep it from frizz. "You should go," Alexandros said, voice deep to contain something painful.

"I don't want to, without you."

"But you want to go."

"*With* you."

"I can't go, Phaistas. My place is here." He pulled back, although less than a hand's span separated them. "My father has something in mind for me. I'm not sure what, but Aristoteles knows something he's not telling me. I have to stay. Besides, Eudoxos didn't ask for me. He asked for *you*. You should go."

"I don't think I can. Not if it means leaving you behind." He hated how his voice shook; he hated feeling so torn, the way the Persikoi would rip a criminal in half between two bent trees, a leg tied tied to each.

"Aristoteles said it would be just a year. We can manage that."

Aristoteles had told Hephaistion the same, but he knew better. He knew mathematics; it would be more than a year. He started to say so, then didn't. He suspected Alexandros knew it too, but they were all playing along with the fiction to make the idea less painful.

"Besides," Alexandros added, "what if my father were to separate us anyway? You're too old for the Pages. You'll get a new assignment, probably in the Pezhetairoi or Royal Kynēgoi." The Hunters, a special unit. "I'm still a Page. We won't be serving together anymore, so what if he leaves you in Pella and takes me to Thrakē, or the reverse?"

Hephaistion eyed him. "You don't honestly think he'll do that."

"He could."

"He could. He likely won't."

Alexandros breathed out and looked down, hands on hips. The room was dim, the afternoon light arcing low from a high window to fall on a corner where their hounds slept atop rush-filled pad, legs akimbo, wiggling in doggy dreams. The villa was mostly quiet. Hephaistion could hear someone speaking softly next door, the only other sounds the music of birds. "My point," Alexandros said, "is that we don't know what the future holds. You could wind up anywhere, I could wind up anywhere. Not necessarily together. We're both under the king's

command. But if you go to Knidos, at least you can be sure of that. And it's what you want."

"I told you, not without you."

"Even if I were free to go, what would I do in Knidos? I'm no *mathematikē*. That's you."

Which was the problem. What Hephaistion excelled at wasn't anything Alexandros could participate in, not really. Yet what Alexandros was destined for.... At least Hephaistion was well-positioned to become an officer one day. Alexandros couldn't follow him, but he could follow Alexandros. And whatever the prince's conjectures, the king wasn't likely to separate them unless for some punishment.

In that moment, Hephaistion knew what he should choose.

"I'm staying in Makedon."

"No, you're not."

"Yes, Aleko, I am."

"But you want to study with Eudokos!"

"If I could share it with you, yes. But I can't, so I don't want it."

"But maths is what you were made for!"

"You're echoing Aristoteles, not listening to me. I said if I can't share it with you, I don't want it. It's not the right time." *Kairos*. "Maybe a right time will come in the future, but it's not now."

He watched the war on Alexandros's face. The prince wanted Hephaistion to stay, but feared he was being selfish. He'd always been deeply generous, even if it left him with nothing. To see others happy gave him sincere pleasure, and that kindness of spirit made Hephaistion love him. He didn't have an uncharitable bone in his body when it came to his friends. "But maths is what you're best at," he reiterated.

"No. What I'm *best* at, or what I'd like to think I'm best at, is being Alexandros's dearest friend." *Philtatē*. "I can't do that from Knidos." At some level, he instinctively knew that if he left now, he'd forfeit his place at the prince's side. Perhaps in the future, when they were older, they'd be able to weather the distance. But they were too young, and this thing between them too new. Immaturity would breed insecurity, which would kill them dead. He might not have been able to verbalize any of that, but he understood it. "I'm staying with you."

"If I said I was grateful, I'd be venal."

"But you're grateful."

“At some point, I’m sending you to Eudoxos.”

“At some point, I’ll let you. Maybe when your father invades Persis.”

Alexandros tipped his head. “We’ve speculated on that before, that he’s planning to.”

“Word is, he’s preparing to attack Perinthos. He’s looking for a bridgehead to Asia.”

“Yes, I think so.”

Abruptly, the prince let out a sigh, as if he’d dropped a heavy load, then began pacing the little room. “You should go, but I don’t want you to go, and I feel badly for keeping you.”

“You’re not keeping me. I don’t want to go without you, and you’re right, if you went with me, what would you do there? You’d be bored to tears. I’m not bored in the army.”

“It doesn’t stretch you.”

Hephaistion shrugged with one shoulder. “For now, I’m content. I’ll go later.”

Alexandros turned his trajectory abruptly to crash into Hephaistion, hugging him hard. “I will never forget that you gave this up to stay with me. And I will send you to Knidos eventually. Sacrifice goes both ways. You’ll not be happy if your mind’s not busy, no more than I would be.”

“I can correspond with him. It may not be the same as being there, but if he’s willing, perhaps he can teach me a few things that way.”

Alexandros leaned his head back. “I’ll pay whatever fee he asks to teach you.”

“My father can pay, Aleko.”

“No, I will. Let me give you that. Please. It’s not as if I can’t afford it.

Hephaistion considered a moment, then nodded. It might help Alexandros accept Hephaistion’s decision. He needed to give. As Hephaistion had just been thinking, it made him happy.

“All right. I’ll ask if he’ll teach me by letter as much as he can, and what he’d charge.”

Satisfied, the prince gave a little nod and let Hephaistion go. “Let’s nap until time for exercise at the *gymnasion*.”

“All right.” Although Hephaistion wondered if they were really going to nap, or if that were an excuse to get naked together. Alexandros still asked for sex in code.

And indeed, there wasn’t much sleeping, although they were both significantly more relaxed when they approached the philosopher in his office after exercise and arms practice, before the evening meal. Their hands were laced, and Hephaistion watched Aristoteles note it,

aware of what they'd come to say before they said it.

Hephaistion's letter to Amyntor was brief. He'd decided not to go to Knidos, but perhaps Eudoxos would be willing to teach him by correspondence. If unsurprised, Amyntor decided it was time to return to Mieza. Odd, that he'd been there only once in the over two years that his son had studied with the philosopher. Early in their sojourn, Aristoteles had written to fathers, inviting them to visit, albeit not all at once as the villa couldn't accommodate everyone. If some lived too far away, Europos was only a day's ride, and Amyntor had wanted to see where his son would be living, and meet the philosopher.

Now, he journeyed there again, arriving unexpectedly at the villa after midday, flustering the philosopher's slaves, who took his horse to curry and feed. Shouldering his pack, he entered without calling out. The front door had been open, after all.

An older slave hurried into the courtyard to meet him. "Sir, I am Myrmex. The master is at the *nymphaion* with the prince and his companions. Might I know your name? I'll see to it that you have wine or water, as you please, and sweetmeats. They should all be returning shortly for the afternoon rest."

Amyntor simply grinned and handed the man his pack. "Put this in a guestroom. I know where the *nymphaion* is. I'll go and find it." He didn't give the man his name, just in case the slave could get to the *nymphaion* faster than Amyntor. When he invited himself to a party, he preferred not to give advance warning. He intended to get to the bottom of this nonsense.

The road from the villa down to the *nymphaion* was straight enough, but he had to climb several flights of wooden stairs up to the sacred precinct. Off to his right, the Borboros bubbled softly, late spring growth spreading green and rich, dotted with red poppies and other flowers in white and yellow and purple. Amyntor didn't know their names, but suspected the philosopher did. In the distance, he could hear chatter: Aristoteles's distinct Greek, the gentle Makedonian twang in boyish voices, interspersed by a few deeper from breaking. Then the soft Attik tenor he'd know anywhere.

Eavesdropping, he paused at the base of the last set of wooden stairs. The philosopher was asking about the highest good, whilst the boys threw out theories, some colorful, on what

constituted the highest good. It was no simple lecture, but involved an enthusiastic cacophony of ideas, combined with teasing and laughter. Amyntor smiled. To get boys to talk so readily spoke well of Aristoteles. Now and then the man would ask some pointed question, steering the conversation, but he never silenced them in order to listen him. He seemed to be doing most of the listening, in fact, from what Amyntor could tell.

And Hephaistion was talking. Amyntor found this mildly astonishing. Even at home, where Hephaistion felt comfortable, he'd never been a particularly verbal child. Here, he was contributing. Not as much as some of the others whose identities Amyntor could only guess, but he *was* contributing. At one point, Amyntor even heard Aristoteles call down one of them, "Leonnatos, let Hephaistion speak; stop interrupting him."

Amyntor settled on one of the wooden stairs to attend further. Finally, Aristoteles walked them all around to the notion that excelling at whatever task they made their own was the highest good. A flautist who played well was virtuous as a flautist, an armorer who fashioned the best armor was virtuous as an armorer. Yet what was mankind's distinct good, as opposed to the beasts of the field? To be rational and seek a medium between deficiency and excess, of course.

Grinning to himself, Amyntor wondered if Aristoteles really thought hot-blooded youths the ideal audience for lessons on rational moderation? Although perhaps putting the notion in their heads at this age wasn't the maddest idea ever, as long as the man understood emotions were driving the lot of them, not common sense. Not at this age.

The tutorial was winding down, so he pushed himself to his feet and went up the last few steps, walking out into the bowl of the *nymphaion*. The philosopher had the boys gathered under the *stoa* while he leaned into a column, gesturing broadly. Spotting Amyntor, his impassioned lecture stuttered into surprised silence.

The other boys looked around to see the reason for their teacher's astonishment, and his own son's jaw dropped. Then he dashed out from under the *stoa* roof to meet Amyntor in a crushing in embrace. "Pappás! What are you doing here?"

"I thought I might listen in on a lesson before there were no more lessons to be heard." Then he called out to the philosopher, "Aristoteles, please pardon the intrusion." Although in truth, intrusion was his intention.

Alexandros had exited the *stoa* too, but now paused between the clump of boys and Amyntor, face wistful.

“Well, come and say ‘*Xhairē*,’ son,” Amyntor told him, arm out.

The prince crossed the short distance to hug Amyntor too. Hephaistion stood aside. Amyntor knew his son wanted nothing more than for Alexandros to feel the same acceptance that he took for granted. Philippos couldn’t give it, not without qualification. Amyntor offered the easy embraces Philippos couldn’t.

Yet he needed to talk to Hephaistion without the prince present. Pushing the boy back and grinning down at him, he said, “It’s good to see you. May I borrow my son for a bit?”

Startled, Alexandros gestured broadly. “Yes. Of course.”

“Aristoteles,” Amyntor called, “I’ll have him back in time for afternoon sparring and exercises, and I’ll join the lot of you for supper.” Glancing at the prince, he winked. “I had cook make plenty of those little apple tarts you liked so much, last time you visited.”

Alexandros’s expression was slightly astonished. “You remembered?”

“Of course.”

Then he was steering Hephaistion away, back in the direction from which he’d come. “Really?” Hephaistion asked softly as they descended the stairs. “You’re bribing Alexandros with apple tarts?”

“Why would I need bribery? Cook was flattered by his enthusiasm for them, and insisted on making some when he heard I was traveling to Mieza. He even made an extra dozen sealed with wax in a little pot just for Alexandros himself.”

“Why’d you come, then? I assumed it was about me going to Knidos. I’m not. I’ve decided to stay in Makedon. I told Aristoteles a couple days ago. I think he’s still angry with me. Or at least irritated.”

They’d stopped on a short pier that extended above the river. Amyntor didn’t reply immediately to Hephaistion’s declaration. “This looks like a good spot for fishing.”

“It is.” His son’s expression was puzzled. “Erigyios and I use it sometimes, if we don’t want to go out to the Arapitsa.”

Amyntor studied the slow-moving stream. It was wide and shallow and choked with greenery. Minnows flitted around the pier piles, making tiny waves in the surface and stirring up silt. He turned to his son. “I received a letter from Aristoteles a few weeks ago. Then, a week later, I got a visit from the king himself.”

“*Philippos* traveled to Europos?”

“Indeed. I think the both of them have something invested in whether you go or stay. That’s why I’m here, to be sure it really is your decision. Not theirs. And not Alexandros’s either.”

“It’s my decision.” His son’s face was resolute, perhaps a bit too much so. “Alexandros wouldn’t be able to come with me.”

“If you did go to Knidos, I assume it wouldn’t be permanent. Aristoteles said a year, maybe two.” Amyntor smiled faintly. “I know that seems like forever, but it’s not. *If* you want to go. I just don’t want anybody making up your mind for you.”

Hephaistion lowered his eyes, then turned to lean on the rail overlooking the water. “I would like to go, yes. I won’t lie. But I don’t want to go right now. I wrote to ask Eudoxos if he might teach me a bit by letter, if he’s willing. Alexandros will pay any fee.”

“I could do that.”

“I know, but he wants to.”

“He’s feeling guilty that he’s keeping you here.”

Hephaistion only nodded. Then added, “That’s why I’m going to let him do it. But it’s more, too. He likes to give things. He really doesn’t expect a return, gets angry if you try to match the gift, says it’s like keeping a tally. He’s the most generous person I’ve ever met. Except maybe you.”

“You have to say that.” Amyntor chuckled. “And I’m only generous to my household and a few others. That’s why I’m among the richest non-royals in Makedon. I don’t give it all away.”

“You’re the richest because you breed the best horses, Pappás. The Argeads are rich because they own all the timber. The king gave Alexandros an estate and about a hundred hektars of forest when he turned fifteen.”

Amyntor was impressed. “I reckon he can afford any student fee, then. Who’s running it for him while he’s here?”

“He is. Well, at least he oversees the reports. He asked for my help with the maths.”

“Of course he did.”

“He’s doing well with it. I think he has a head for organization.”

“So do you. I taught you.”

“You did. His, he learned from his mother. She’s handling some as well, but he does receive his steward here monthly, and the field workers do timber cutting when it’s out of

planting season.”

Amyntor nodded. “I reckon Philippos wants him to learn how to manage estates when he’s not also trying to run an army. The king had lands from his own brother before he became king.” He waved a hand. “That aside, when you decide you want to go to Knidos, let me know.”

“I will. I prefer a bit of time with the army first, to earn some rank. Otherwise, when I return, I’ll be starting at the bottom, but older than the rest. I don’t want that.”

A good point. Amyntor pursed his lips. Hephaistion had clearly given it some thought. “You’ll find there’s a plateau, once you’ve reached the lower officer levels, before you’re old enough to climb any higher.”

“That’s when it might be time to go, when I could spare a year or two. We might even be in Asia by then. I know the king is thinking about invading once he’s settled Thrakē.”

“Don’t expect an invasion that quickly. A campaign against Asia would require a great deal of planning, and I doubt the Greek city-states will simply nod and go along.” He paused, then pressed a bit. “Are you sure you don’t want to go now?”

“No.” It was curt and definitive.

Amyntor glanced at his son. “Talk to me honestly, Phaistas.”

“I don’t believe in fate.”

That might seem a non-sequitur, but Amyntor kept his mouth shut, waiting for his son to elaborate. The gurgle of the stream made a soft underscore.

“I don’t believe in destiny, or the gods. I know that upsets you; I know it upsets Alexandros. But I *do* believe....” He trailed off and fell into one of his contemplative silences. Amyntor let him. Birds trilled. Amyntor pulled a leaf off a nearby bush and tossed it into swirling water, watching it float away. Muggy spring heat had him sweating in the shade.

“I believe in having a *purpose*,” Hephaistion said finally. “I love geometry. I’d love to study with Eudoxos. But that’s not a purpose. Alexandros gives me purpose. I know that sounds ridiculous. Romantic.” He made a gesture between frustration and dismissal. “I’d laugh at myself, but I feel it here.” He pressed a fist to his diaphragm. “He needs me. I matter to him.”

Amyntor was heart-struck. “Hephaistion, you matter beyond just Alexandros. Your mother and I—”

“I know you both love me. I didn’t mean to imply you didn’t.” He was blushing, and gripped Amyntor’s arm. “But Alexandros needs me more than I need geometry. I like feeling

needed. I know it doesn't sound very logical, but it's why I have to stay. This is where I belong right now."

Grinning softly, Amyntor patted his son's hand. "Logic isn't everything."

At the evening meal of cheese pastries, grilled catfish, and baked fennel and onions on wheat bread, Aristoteles put the boys through their paces for Amyntor. He'd set up paired disputations on the mind versus the soul, on the various forms of friendship, and on fate versus free will. The concluding dispute was a face-off between Alexandros and Hephaistion, the latter of whom, predictably, argued for free will. If not a clear win, Hephaistion showed himself admirably. His great virtue, Aristoteles thought, was a disinclination to lose to Alexandros either for status or love. Alexandros's virtue was to accept the challenge. They went at it with relish, clearly enjoying the contest. Aristoteles believed Amyntor enjoyed it as well, as he rose to give both boys kisses and individualized praise at the end.

After, Aristoteles and his unexpected guest retired to his office, where they had more wine and the last apple tarts, or at least those that didn't belong to the prince. They were seated across from one another in a pair of chairs.

"Mind telling me what's been going on between you and the king regarding my son?" Amyntor began, wasting no time. He and Hephaistion were much alike in everything from their mannerisms to a complete disregard for social niceties.

Aristoteles took a long drink. "Nothing beyond what you already know." Well, not much. "I asked Philippos to release Hephaistion from his service, so he could study with Eudoxos in Knidos. Philippos said he would, if Hephaistion asked, but insisted he wouldn't ask. He'd stay in Makedonia."

Amyntor eyed him as if suspecting more to it, but didn't push. He just took a bite of tart.

"It's a waste," Aristoteles added, irked. "The squandering of a remarkable mind. Do you have any idea—?"

"Yes," Amyntor interrupted. "I do. You forget; I raised him."

The sharpness of the other man's words silenced Aristoteles. Amyntor's eyes were as black and cutting as his son's. "I may not understand the geometry you both get on about, but I

sure as dawn comes know he's exceptional. Why do you think I kept him home from Pella? It wasn't that I feared he'd die in combat, although I did. I was afraid Philippos's blasted wars would break his soul. I've fought; I know what it's like to kill a man. Have you ever had to do that, philosopher? Watch another's heart-blood spill into the dirt while he cried for his Mammá? Why would I wish that on my gentlest child? The one who begged me, with tears streaming down his face, to spare an orphaned foal? That's what *I* worry about."

He looked old, and Aristoteles realized abruptly that Amyntor had a good decade on either himself or the king. He'd raised five children and buried three. And if Aristoteles knew himself scolded, he hoped he might also have found an ally. "You wouldn't have to fear for that, if he were in Knidos. You don't want him in the army. I don't think he wants to be in the army. He just doesn't want to leave Alexandros. Talk him into it. He'll listen to you."

Amyntor's sigh was long and loud. He stared at the trio of lamps burning on their stand. "Do you know what happened the last time I tried to keep him from doing something he was determined to do? He ran away. He can't be forced."

"I didn't say force him; I said talk to him."

"I did, this afternoon. But the difference between me and you is that I wanted to know what *he* wants. He's young and inexperienced, but he's no fool. I'm satisfied with his reasons for staying."

"He's staying for Alexandros."

"Of course he is, but that's not it alone, and he's not closed the door on the future. I might prefer to see him in Knidos, out of the way of Philippos's imperial ambitions, but there's more to him than a mind. There's a heart, too, a mighty one. I won't drive him from Alexandros. That would shatter him worse than anything battle could do."

"You sound like Philippos. They're *boys*. This love affair isn't going to last."

Amyntor set down the cup of wine from which he'd not been drinking. It was a careful gesture, and Aristoteles thought it concealed something more violent. "Love affair? You think that's all this is? You see them every day. Are you blind, man? I raised twin boys, and one couldn't live without the other. I see the same thing now between Hephaistion and Alexandros, and they didn't share a womb. What they have is *rare*, and well beyond anything so simple as fancying."

"I know it is," Aristoteles replied, conciliatory. He did believe in their devotion, although

was dubious of the crush. “But true friendship doesn’t require proximity.”

“At their age, it does, a bit. They’re young; they’re learning what friendship means.”

“It’s *passion* keeping him here.”

Amyntor appeared amused. “You’ve had a pack of boys for over two years. Haven’t you realized by now that they’re all a *bundle* of passions. Moderation isn’t in their vocabulary. At their age, everything’s a crisis, even for the most level-headed. Hephaistion is level-headed, but he’s also eighteen. He has reasons for staying, and has thought it through. If I want him to be an adult, I have to treat him like one, as long as he’s not endangering himself.”

Rising from his chair, Aristoteles sighed explosively and paced. “It’s just...we never know what the future will hold. They don’t think about that! I don’t want Hephaistion to lose this opportunity. The longer he stays here, the harder it’ll be for him to leave. Right now, he’s young, he’s flexible....”

Amyntor burst out laughing. “Have you met my son, Aristoteles? He gets a notion in his head and he’s like a stallion with the bit in his teeth and an iron neck.”

Annoyed, Aristoteles waved a hand. “He’s stubborn, yes, but that’s not what I meant. He can adapt quickly yet. He should go before he’s weighed down by military service and an officer’s position. More, I can’t say how much longer Eudoxos will be teaching. He’s not terribly old, but was always a bit frail, unlike Platon.”

Amyntor appeared thoughtful, fingers steepled in front of his face, chin on his thumbs. “Your argument on timing is more to the point. Yet for Hephaistion to keep up with the rest of his cohort, he should return to Pella now and take time off for studies later. While I’m not sanguine about his participation in the army, if he falls behind early, there’s no catching up. He’s right about that.”

He rose, too, and cracked his back, then held out a hand to the philosopher, who took it. Aristoteles had never been especially thick or muscular, unlike his old teacher, Platon, a wrestler in his youth, but standing before Amyntor, he felt downright puny. As tall as his son, Amyntor also had the breadth of a man who’d done physical labor most of his life. From what Hephaistion had said, Amyntor was as likely as any of his grooms to be carting grain pails or currying horses, or even mucking out a stall occasionally. He certainly had the build for it, and his grip on Aristoteles’s hand was effortlessly solid. “I appreciate that you care so for my son, Aristoteles. Any father would. Our children are our pride. But in this, I’ll defer to what Hephaistion wants to

do.”

“Even if he’s making a mistake?”

“It’s his to make.” Amyntor released Aristoteles’s hand, but didn’t move to leave.

“Thinking on it, I have to wonder if this is still about Hephaistion, or has it become about you?”

Startled and frowning, Aristoteles pulled in his chin, but didn’t reply.

Amyntor continued, “You went out of your way to secure a place for him at Knidos, which was gracious on your part. But it also put your reputation on the line with your old mentor, and now Hephaistion is rejecting your plan. That’s difficult to swallow, isn’t it?”

Aristoteles opened his mouth, closed it, opened it again, but nothing came out initially. He felt hot with humiliation and anger. “This is *not* about me. I get no benefit from the arrangement. I just hate to see the waste of brilliance.”

“I’m not accusing you of mercenary ends. And I’m sure it frustrates you that a man who could be a philosopher would choose to be a soldier instead.” Amyntor’s tone wasn’t, quite, appeasing. “But I think it’s equally frustrating to have your advice ignored. You’re a teacher; you’re used to being listened to.”

That stung. “That’s not it. We both know Hephaistion would go to Knidos if not for Alexandros. He’s letting passion intercept reason. He *knows* what’s best for him, but is doing the opposite.”

“Perhaps pursuing geometry isn’t what’s best for him.”

“How can *not* doing what you excel at be best? That’s absurd.”

Amyntor appeared almost sad. “What he most excels at *isn’t* maths. He needs to be needed, and Alexandros needs him. That gives him purpose. He’s not like you, or me. We have different ambitions. More typical. His arise from the heart. Always have. I told you, he’s my gentlest child, the one who feels the most deeply. But he’s also my strongest. He’s made up his mind and nobody will change it. Not you, not me, not even Alexandros.” Turning, he opened the door, but still didn’t exit. “Do you know what was the hardest day of my life, besides those when I heard my sons were dead?”

Aristoteles shook his head, curious despite his aggravation.

“The morning I left Pella, but Hephaistion stayed behind in the Pages’ barracks. I had to let him go. My baby boy wasn’t a baby, and he wasn’t an extension of me. Think about that.”

He closed the door behind him, and Aristoteles sank back into his chair, ego-bruised but

contemplative. He could admit when he was defeated. Yet labeling it “defeat” made it about him, as Amyntor had just accused. He and Philippos had turned another’s future into a transitory contest.

He hadn’t initially thought of it so; it had been only a friendly wager, healthy competition between old friends. He’d been certain Hephaistion would elect to pursue advanced study, and had looked forward to proving to Philippos that war and glory weren’t everything. Other sorts of triumph existed, such as the life of the mind.

Instead, Hephaistion had chosen *phília* over *philosophía*: love itself over the love of knowledge, *or* over Akhilleus’s undying fame.

The heart over the mind.

War wasn’t everything. But neither was knowledge.

Author’s After-notes & Acknowledgments:

I must thank my colleague Griff Edler, a professor in the Department of Mathematics at UNO, not only for replying to my request for math help, but for writing up an explanation of what Eudoxos was trying to say. I fear much of it went over my head, but I did struggle through it several times. Hephaistion’s short monologue owes to Griff’s comments.

I also thank him for telling me about Dedekind Cuts. So, for any mathematicians out there, going forward, Hephaistion will utilize Eudoxos’s magnitudes as a basis for an early theory of Dedekind Cuts, before Dedekind. Assume that’s what he and Eudoxos will be writing back and forth about.

As for Eudoxos, we have no complete work still extant, only fragmenta contained in other authors. The quote I used is found in Euclid’s Book 5.

[Contact Jeanne Reames](#)