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opening extract from

Terribly True Spy Stories

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INTRODUCTION





My name is Bond, James Bond, but you can call me 007. Well, that's not true. My name is not James Bond, and James Bond never existed. But we can all dream and spying seems a dream job ... *if* you believe all you see in the cinema and read in the books.

Spies seem so glamorous. Their lives are full of excitement and they are always such heroes! They are working for their country against an evil enemy who is out to destroy them. They are snatching secrets from under the noses of some foreign secret police and bringing them home. They are our guardian angels.

Of course enemy spies are not so glamorous, are they? They are traitors who sneak about, lying, murdering and stealing from our country. Enemy spies will use any low and dirty trick you can imagine to get their hands on our secrets. They are the worst devils of our nightmares.

Spies are angels – when they are on our side. Spies are devils when they work for the enemy. What is the truth? Would you like to be a spy? There is only one way to find out. Forget about James Bond for a while. Look at some true spy stories. Study the people who have lived and died as spies, the way they worked, the sort of things they had to do.

Spies have been around for thousands of years. Did you know that there are spy stories in the Bible? In one story, a Persian called Zopyrus wanted to get inside Babylon and let his Persian army in. He walked up to the gates of Babylon and said, "I want to join you. I hate the Persians. I tried to talk them out of attacking Babylon so they cut off my ears and my nose and whipped me till I bled."

The Babylonians believed Zopyrus and let him into the city – as soon as he had the chance the sneaky Zopyrus opened the gates of Babylon and let in his Persian friends.

How could the Babylonians have been so stupid as to believe this lying spy? Because they saw he had no nose, no ears and his back was raw with whipping. If *you* saw this horrid sight then wouldn't you believe he hated the Persians for doing that to him?

The *truth* about Zopyrus the spy is too amazing to believe. Zopyrus whipped himself, cut off his own nose and lopped off his own ears just to get into Babylon.

What a hero – to the Persians.

Could *you* do that for *your* country? Can you imagine James Bond cutting off his nose? No! Because James Bond stories are make-believe and Zopyrus's is a true spy story. If you want to know more true spy stories then read them here.

ALEXANDER THE GREATEST





Spying is about gathering information and stealing secrets. Leaders want to know what their enemies are up to. In the 1500s, Queen Elizabeth had one of the world's first spy organizations run by her spy-master Sir Francis Walsingham. But before that, rulers had to come up with their own plots. Alexander the Great was a master of secret schemes. Some say he murdered his own father to get control of the kingdom. He then went on to conquer Greece and Persia. He was the master of the greatest empire in the world, but he still wasn't safe. Alexander had no spy-master like Sir Francis Walsingham. He had to do it all for himself...

Date: 327 BC
Place: Persia

The man was barefoot and dirty. His hair was matted and his body was covered in sores. His body was hunched and he looked over his shoulder every few steps. At last he arrived at the magnificent silk tent. "I've come to see the emperor," he croaked.

The guard looked at him with disgust but lowered his spear and nodded for the man to enter the tent. Alexander was lying on a couch and studying a map when the shabby man slid in. He looked up sharply. The emperor was a young man, but the strain

of the fighting and the constant danger had given him hard lines at the edge of his large eyes and firm mouth. "Did anyone see you?"

"No, sir," the man said in a soft whine.

Alexander rested his hand on the hilt of the dagger at his belt. "It had better be important," he said menacingly.

"It is, sir."

"Quickly then, what is it?"

"It's some of your men, sir. They're not happy."

The emperor swung his feet to the floor and planted a strong hand on the map. "I have given them Greece and its wealth," he said, jabbing at the map with his finger. He moved it to the right. "We've conquered Persia and its riches. Now we're going to take India and enough of its treasures to make them rich for life," he said, sweeping his fingers to the south-east. "What more do they want?"

"They want to go home, sir."

Alexander's lip curled in a sneer. "Over my dead body."

The man in the tattered tunic clasped his hands tightly. "I think that's what they are planning, sir," he whispered.

His master snorted. "So, it's come to that, has it? They plan to murder me and run home to their dear little wives and mothers, do they?"

"That's what I heard them plan, sir."

"Which men are leading the plot?"

"Oh, I can't tell you that, sir. They wouldn't let a camp-follower like me into their great tents, sir. I only know what I heard through the tent walls."

"Didn't you recognize the voices?"

The man shook his head sadly. "No, sir."

"Get out," Alexander ordered. As the man backed slowly towards the door the emperor reached into a leather pouch and took out a coin. He threw it on to the floor. The man snatched it with a stained hand and ran out into the night. Alexander lay

back on his couch, closed his eyes and rested a hand on his brow. The only sound was the sputtering of oil lamps and the distant barking of dogs on guard at the edge of the camp.

After a long while he rose slowly and walked to the opening of the tent. "Fetch General Parmenion," he snapped. The guard woke from his doze and pulled himself to attention.

Parmenion had been asleep when his leader's message came. He threw on a tunic and sandals and limped through the rows of tents by the light of the dying camp-fires. He combed his grey hair with his fingers and entered Alexander's tent. He saluted quickly and waited.

"Parmenion," Alexander said warmly. "Sit down, my friend."

The general sat on the couch, while Alexander paced the floor of the tent. "Sorry to wake you."

"I'm used to it," the old soldier laughed. "You've had one of your ideas, I suppose."

"Yes, Parmenion. I am worried about the men being so far from home. We've been away from Greece for two years now. Some of the men must be getting a little homesick."

"They worry about their families, of course," Parmenion said.

"Don't we all?"

"I have my son Nicias alongside me," the general smiled. "I'm one of the lucky ones."

"You *are*. But I thought it might be good for the men to get in touch with their families. I thought I'd arrange to have a wagon sent home to deliver their letters."

Parmenion shrugged. "We've tried it before, but the wagons have always been attacked and robbed by bandits on land or pirates at sea. Writing those letters was just a waste of time."

"But this time it would be different. This time I would send it with a strong armed guard."

Parmenion gave a broad smile. "That is marvellous, sir. It will be very popular with the men."

Alexander looked up sharply. "Am I not popular now?"

Parmenion's smile faded. "Oh! Of course, Emperor! The men love you!"

"*All* of the men?"

"*All* of them," Parmenion cried.

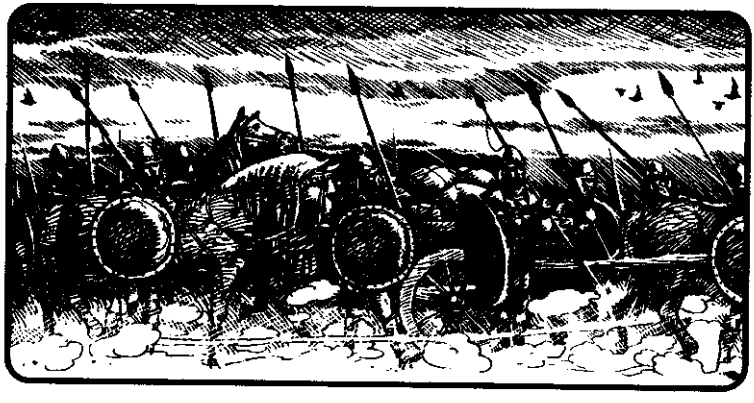
Alexander slapped a hand on his general's shoulder. "You are a good man, Parmenion. Too good at times. You see only the good in our friends. You don't see the bad. But I trust you, Parmenion. Of all the officers in this army, you're the only one I trust."

"Thank you, sir."

"I'll announce the mail wagon tomorrow at the planning meeting. It will leave tomorrow evening."

The next morning, Alexander explained his plan to send letters back to Greece and told his officers that the day would be a rest day. They could spend the time writing. "I promise you, the letters will be safe in my care. I have selected the men who will escort the wagon. There are no better men in this army."

As evening fell on the dusty plain, the mail wagon was loaded and was placed in the middle of a convoy of heavily armed soldiers with their own baggage and supplies wagons. The order was given to leave and the company set off slowly towards the setting sun.



After half an hour, the camp was out of sight and the road took the wagons into some low hills. A man sat on top of one hill and watched them pass below him, then he rode slowly down towards the lumbering horses. The driver stopped and saluted. "Good evening, Emperor."

"Good evening, Captain," Alexander said, and he smiled grimly. "Stop here for a while. Give the men food but no wine – I want them awake for the rest of the night. And light some torches so I can read."

The company dismounted and began to gather wood for fires, while their emperor pulled the parcels of letters from the wagon and began to open them. After an hour Alexander had two piles of letters. He picked up the smaller pile and called the commander of the company across to him. "These letters here are the ones that have the information I want. The writers have told their loved ones all about a plot to kill me and return home. Some have very kindly listed all the men who are part of the plot. Of course they will have to die."

"Yes, sir."

"I've made a list of the names. I want you to leave the wagons here and return to the camp on horseback with me. We'll take these men while they are asleep. There will be no need for any trials. You will bring them to me one at a time, I will listen to their confessions in my tent, and then you will take them outside and execute them. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, Emperor."

"Then let's make ready."

It was deep into the night when the sleepy and confused plotters were dragged from their beds and held under close guard until Alexander was ready to see them. Parmenion hurried from the comfort of his bed for the second night running and dashed into Alexander's tent. "What is happening, Emperor?"

Alexander held up one of the letters. "We have traitors in our midst, Parmenion."

The general read the letter quickly and his face creased with pain. "Hippothales? A traitor? Who'd have thought it?" he cried.

"I told you that you trusted people too much, Parmenion. But it is there in his own writing. I have to execute him and the other men on my list."

"Of course you do," the general said. "They deserve it."

"I'm glad you agree," Alexander said softly. Then he called, "Bring in the first traitor!"

The guards led a young officer into the tent. His face was bruised and bleeding from the struggle he'd put up when he was arrested. Parmenion looked at the young man and turned pale. "Nicias!" he moaned.

"Yes," Alexander nodded. "Your son." The emperor looked at the prisoner. "Have you anything to say, Nicias?"

The young man raised his chin so he looked down on the emperor. "You are a tyrant and an evil man, Alexander. You are not satisfied with conquering half of the world. You want it all!"

Alexander nodded slowly. "I conquered half the world by being ruthless with anyone who stood in my way. And that's how I'll conquer the other half. You'll have to die so I can live."

"I'm not afraid."

Alexander laughed suddenly. "Hah! And *I'm* not afraid to die *some* day. I'm just not ready to die yet. It's such a waste."

"Then let him live," Parmenion put in quickly.

The emperor frowned. "Moments ago you agreed that these traitors should all die."

Parmenion hung his head. When he raised it again his eyes were filled with tears. His son was being hauled out of the tent and he took a step to follow. Two of Alexander's bodyguards seized his arms and held him back. Alexander walked across to

him and stood very close. "If I have the son killed, then the father will have a duty to avenge his son ... won't you, Parmenion?"

"Yes."

"So, even though you didn't plot against me, I will have to have you killed too. You understand, don't you?"

"Yes."

The emperor's large, dark eyes softened. "Nicias was wrong, my friend. It's not *enough* to be ruthless and cruel. If you want to rule the world you need something else. You need cunning. You must trust no one, Parmenion. Especially not the ones who say they are your friends. Watch their every move and set traps. Spy out their secrets and know everything. That's the way to rule the world, Parmenion." He stretched out his arms and held the old general close for a few moments. "Goodbye, my friend. Goodbye."

Alexander was so upset by the execution of Parmenion and the other plotters that he refused to eat for a week. In the end he was force-fed by his friends.

The emperor wasn't the only famous person to become a spy. There have been many people who were famous for other things but were also spies. People like London Lord Mayor Dick Whittington, who spied for his king on foreign travels and England's first great poet, Geoffrey Chaucer, who wrote spy reports in a secret code. These are just a few of the ones we know about...