

Stele

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Stele

by [fawatson](#)

Summary

Thalia and Alexias mourn Lysis.

Notes

Request: How did they mourn Lysis?

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Author's Note: Additional fanfic set in this universe is available at:
<http://maryrenaultfics.livejournal.com/>

This was *her* ceremony. She had had to wait for it; the waiting had just made it that much more important to her. It was entirely private; Thalia had asked for that. Alexias had brought her here. She had tried to slip out on her own; but he had seen her leaving and insisted it would not do for his wife to be out alone; and she had accepted his right to insist. Once at the grove, when she had begged him to leave her, to give her a few moments alone, he had agreed, smiling in that understanding way he had. Alexias would keep a watchful eye at the end of the path; but she knew she wouldn't have much time before someone came along and Alexias came back for her. She would have to work quickly.

From her basket came a little votive bowl, and a small clay jar. Its fastening was stiff and Thalia's fingers awkward in the chill morning air; and it *would not open*. She made a small sound of frustration, before she smashed the container open with a stone. The incense inside was crumbling from age, saved as it had been from years before when her father died. Each year since, she had sacrificed a pinch on the altar at home on the anniversary of her father's death. Now she piled the last of the precious incense into the votive bowl, and used a flint and ironstone to strike a spark and set it alight.

She sat before the stele. It was just a small one. There was a big impressive one the city had erected with a public ceremony to honour all the men who had died to liberate it. Alexias had gone to that; not fully recovered from his own injury, he had nonetheless insisted on attending (though none would have thought the worse of him for not going, still limping as he had been). He had attended to honour Lysis, and on returning told her about the massive stone the city had erected in honour.

This was a little stone, and rather plain. Prominent private citizens might erect a large monument with carving on all sides; but her family had only a little money to spare. Lysis' family were all dead, and unable to contribute. Her dead husband would have been left without any stone – as indeed many men were – had Alexias not taken it on himself. He could only afford a simple carving, "...but it must be the best," he had insisted, "even if not very large." He had gone early one morning to bargain with Polykleitos, and not returned until nightfall. When she had asked why it had taken so long, Alexias had laughed, and said, "that man is nothing if not consistent in what he wants. I had to sit for him!"

Thalia reached out a hand to trace the lines of the rearing horse carved in bas-relief, and the dear figure riding it. The torso could be anybody; but the stone mason had done a good job on the face. "Farewell, my husband," whispered Thalia softly, as a tear trickled down one cheek. "I am with Alexias. You need have no fear for your memory or honour, which is safe and well in his hands."

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