

# Practice Makes Perfect

“Five hundred men died to get you your dinner, ‘Your Highness.’” The Grand Vizier wasn’t trying to hide his contempt for me any longer, which was actually a bit of a relief. “Do try to be grateful for it.”

I grunted, instead of snarling *I didn’t ask them to!* It’s good that I have a naturally placid face, because behind it I was calculating. This time, it had only taken three hundred, forty men. And the survivors knew why fewer had died this time. We’d do better next time. And the next.

I’d cap the *final* cost at ‘one,’ though.

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