

The Card Library

Legends • Atlas of Kings • Hall of Persian Words • Wonders of Persia

WHAT'S INSIDE

Legends (42 cards): the kings, heroes, villains, and creatures of the Shahnameh, each with its story, bloodline, Who Am I? clues, and a discussion question. **Atlas of Kings** (15 cards): the places of the epic, from Mount Damavand to Persepolis. **Hall of Persian Words** (55 cards): Persian script, pronunciation, and meaning. **Wonders of Persia** (18 cards): trivia questions from 3,000 years of Persian history, tagged by era: Age of Empires, Golden Age, and Age of Poets.

WAYS TO PLAY

The library is a toolkit, not a rulebook. Here are some ways to start, and every new deck adds more. **Who Am I?** One reader holds a Legends or Atlas card and reads the clues aloud, hardest first. Guess after clue one for 3 points, clue two for 2, clue three for 1. **Sort the Court.** Shuffle the Legends deck and race to sort cards into kings, heroes, villains, and creatures. **Build the Bloodline.** Use the Bloodline lines to lay out family trees on the table: connect Sam to Zal to Rostam to Sohrab. **Word Match.** Lay Word cards script-side up and take turns recalling the meaning before flipping. **Wonders Quiz Night.** Ask the Wonders questions across the table; first correct answer keeps the card. **Story Chains.** Draw three cards and tell one story that truthfully connects all three. **Epic Lands Quest.** Put a map in the middle: the Epic Lands map at epicofkings.com, or any map of the region. Draw an Atlas card, solve the Where Am I? clues, then find the place on the map. Score a bonus point for naming a character or event connected to it. **Timeline of Kings.** Pull out the ten King cards and lay them in the order they reigned, from the first king to the last. The card numbers are the answer key, so cover the corners while you play. For a harder round, shuffle in heroes and place each one in the age of the king they served, then check yourselves against the Timeline of Kings on the site.

PRINTING

This edition is duplex-ready: each page of card fronts is followed by its matching page of backs. Print double-sided, flipping on the **long edge**, on cardstock if possible, then cut along the gold borders. Content follows the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi; spellings match epicofkings.com.

KING



KIUMARS

کیومرث

The first king, father of civilization

KING 1 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

KING



HOOSHANG

هوشنگ

Discoverer of fire, master of iron

KING 2 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

KING



TAHMORIS

طهمورث

The Div-Binder

KING 3 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

KING



JAMSHID

جمشید

The king who founded Nowruz, then lost the Farr

KING 4 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

HOOSHANG

KING OF IRAN

The grandson of Kiumars avenged his father Siamak and became a great civilizing king. Hooshang discovered fire by striking two stones together, taught humanity to work iron, built irrigation, and established the festival of Sadeh.

BLOODLINE

Father Siamak • Grandfather Kiumars

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I established the festival of Sadeh.
- ★★ I discovered fire by striking two stones together.
- ★ I avenged my father Siamak.

THINK ABOUT IT

Which discovery changed life the most: fire, iron, or farming?

KING 2 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

KIUMARS

KING OF IRAN

The very first king in the Shahnameh. Kiumars taught humanity to cook food, make clothes, and live together in society. In the epic, all human history begins with him. His reign was cut short when Ahriman's son killed his beloved son Siamak.

BLOODLINE

Son Siamak • Grandson Hooshang

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I taught people to cook and make clothing.
- ★★ My son fell in the first battle of good and evil.
- ★ I was the very first king in the Shahnameh.

THINK ABOUT IT

What makes someone a good first leader?

KING 1 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

JAMSHID

KING OF IRAN

Jamshid ruled in splendor for centuries, taught weaving and medicine, and established Nowruz. But when he declared himself a god, the divine Farr abandoned him, and Zahhak rose to overthrow him.

BLOODLINE

Founded Nowruz • Lost the Farr • Overthrown by Zahhak

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I ruled in splendor for centuries.
- ★★ I established the festival of Nowruz.
- ★ I lost the Farr when I called myself a god.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why is pride so dangerous for leaders?

KING 4 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

TAHMORRIS

KING OF IRAN

The king who captured demons and forced them to teach humanity the art of writing. Tahmorris subdued Ahriman himself and rode him across the world like a horse. His reign is the triumph of human cunning over supernatural evil.

BLOODLINE

Known as the Div-Binder • Gift to humanity writing

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Demons taught humanity writing because of me.
- ★★ I rode Ahriman across the world like a horse.
- ★ I am called the Div-Binder.

THINK ABOUT IT

Can cleverness ever beat raw strength?

KING 3 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

KING

LEGENDARY

FEREYDUN

فریدون

The hero-king who chained Zabbak

KING 5 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

KING

MANUCHEHR

منوچهر

The king who avenged Iraj

KING 6 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

KING

KAY KAVUS

کیکاووس

The brave but reckless king

KING 7 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

KING

KAY KHOSROW

کیخسرو

The king who walked away from the throne

KING 8 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

MANUCHEHR

KING OF IRAN

A strong and wise early king, Manuchehr avenged the murder of Iraj and restored justice to Persia. The legendary champions Sam and Zal both served under his reign, laying the ground for the age of heroes.

BLOODLINE

Descendant of Iraj • Champions Sam and Zal

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Sam and Zal served during my reign.
- ★★ I restored justice after a terrible betrayal.
- ★ I avenged the murder of Iraj.

THINK ABOUT IT

What is the difference between justice and revenge?

KING 6 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

FEREYDUN

KING OF IRAN

With Kaveh's help, Fereydun overthrew the tyrant Zahhak and bound him beneath Mount Damavand. He ruled wisely for centuries, but dividing his kingdom among his three sons led to the murder of his most virtuous son, Iraj.

BLOODLINE

Defeated Zahhak • Sons Salm, Tur, Iraj

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I divided my kingdom among three sons.
- ★★ Kaveh's banner flew for my cause.
- ★ I chained Zahhak beneath Mount Damavand.

THINK ABOUT IT

Was dividing the kingdom an act of love or a mistake?

KING 5 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

KAY KHOSROW

KING OF IRAN

Son of the martyred Siavash, Kay Khosrow united Persia and Turan and avenged his father by defeating Afrasiyab. Then, at the height of his power, he abdicated rather than risk being corrupted by it, and vanished into legend.

BLOODLINE

Father Siavash • Grandfather Kay Kavus •
Defeated Afrasiyab

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I united Iran and Turan.
- ★★ I avenged my father Siavash.
- ★ I walked away from my throne at the height of my power.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why might giving up power be a sign of strength?

KING 8 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

KAY KAVUS

KING OF IRAN

Brave but often reckless and vain, Kay Kavus tried to fly to heaven with eagles, was captured by a demon king, and repeatedly put Persia in danger. Yet Rostam served him faithfully and rescued him time and again.

BLOODLINE

Son Siavash • Grandson Kay Khosrow • Rescuer
Rostam

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I tried to fly to heaven using eagles.
- ★★ My recklessness sent Rostam on the Seven Trials.
- ★ Rostam rescued me again and again.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why do people stay loyal to a leader who keeps making mistakes?

KING 7 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

KING

LOHRASP

لهراسپ

Keeper of the hard-won peace

KING 9 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

KING

GOSHTASP

گشتاسپ

The king who embraced Zoroaster's faith

KING 10 OF 10

EPIC OF KINGS

HERO

SIAMAK

سیامک

The prince of the first great battle

HERO 1 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

HERO

LEGENDARY

KAVEH

کاوه

The blacksmith whose apron became a banner

HERO 2 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

GOSHTASP

KING OF IRAN

The king who embraced Zoroastrianism and spread its teachings across Persia from his seat at Balkh. Yet he also sent his own son Esfandiyar on the mission that led to tragedy, making him one of the epic's most complex kings.

BLOODLINE

Son Esfandiyar • **City** Balkh • **Faith** Zoroastrianism

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Zoroaster's faith spread during my reign.
- ★★ My capital was the ancient city of Balkh.
- ★ I sent my son Esfandiyar to fight Rostam.

THINK ABOUT IT

Should a king ever put duty above his own child?

KING 10 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

LOHRASP

KING OF IRAN

Lohrasp succeeded Kay Khosrow after his mysterious disappearance. A just and capable ruler, he maintained the peace Kay Khosrow had won and established the dynasty that his son Goshtasp would carry forward.

BLOODLINE

Succeeded Kay Khosrow • **Son** Goshtasp

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I ruled after a king vanished into legend.
- ★★ I kept the peace that Kay Khosrow won.
- ★ My son is Goshtasp.

THINK ABOUT IT

Is keeping the peace as heroic as winning a war?

KING 9 OF 10

EPICOFKINGS.COM

KAVEH

HERO

A humble blacksmith who refused to surrender his sons to Zahhak's serpents and raised his leather apron as a banner of revolt. That apron, the Derafsh Kaviani, became the royal banner of Persia for centuries.

BLOODLINE

Defied Zahhak • **Banner** Derafsh Kaviani • **Ally** Fereydun

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I was a blacksmith.
- ★★ A tyrant took my sons.
- ★ My apron became a banner.

THINK ABOUT IT

Can an ordinary person become a hero? How?

HERO 2 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SIAMAK

HERO

The brave son of the first king, Siamak died fighting Ahriman's demon son in the world's very first battle between good and evil. His death devastated Kiumars, and his own son Hooshang would one day avenge him.

BLOODLINE

Father Kiumars • **Son** Hooshang

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I fell in the world's first great battle.
- ★★ Ahriman's demon son struck me down.
- ★ My father was the very first king.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why do so many great stories begin with a great loss?

HERO 1 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

HERO

IRAJ
 ایرج
The prince killed for his own virtue

HERO 3 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

HERO

SAM
 سام
The mighty champion who abandoned his son

HERO 4 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

HERO

ZAL
 زال
The white-haired sage, raised by the Simorgh

HERO 5 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

HERO

RUDABEH
 رودابه
The princess who chose love over custom

HERO 6 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

SAM

HERO

One of the mightiest warriors of his age. When his son Zal was born with snow-white hair, Sam believed it an evil omen and left the infant on a mountaintop. He later repented and was reunited with him. His line produced Rostam.

BLOODLINE

Son Zal • Grandson Rostam

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I served kings as their mightiest champion.
- ★★ I abandoned my newborn son for his white hair.
- ★ My grandson is Rostam.

THINK ABOUT IT

Can someone make a terrible mistake and still be a hero?

HERO 4 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

IRAJ

HERO

The youngest and most beloved of Fereydun's sons. When his brothers demanded his portion of the kingdom, Iraj gave it up willingly to keep the peace. They murdered him anyway, setting off generations of vengeance.

BLOODLINE

Father Fereydun • Brothers Salm and Tur •
Avenged by Manuchehr

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I gave up my portion of the kingdom to keep peace.
- ★★ My own brothers killed me anyway.
- ★ My father was Fereydun.

THINK ABOUT IT

Was Iraj's choice brave, unwise, or both?

HERO 3 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

RUDABEH

HERO

The princess of Kabul who fell in love with the silver-haired Zal against all custom. When Zal came to her tower, she let down her hair as a rope, but Zal wouldn't climb it for fear of hurting her, so he used a rope of his own instead. She became the mother of Rostam.

BLOODLINE

Husband Zal • Son Rostam • Home Kabul

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ My family descends from Zahhak.
- ★★ I offered my hair as a rope, but he used his own instead.
- ★ I am Rostam's mother.

THINK ABOUT IT

What risks did Rudabeh take for love, and were they worth it?

HERO 6 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ZAL

HERO

Born with snow-white hair and abandoned by his father Sam, Zal was raised by the mythical Simorgh on Mount Alborz. He became one of the wisest counselors in Persia, won Rudabeh's heart, and fathered the great Rostam.

BLOODLINE

Father Sam • Wife Rudabeh • Son Rostam

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ A magical bird raised me.
- ★★ I was born with white hair.
- ★ Rostam is my son.

THINK ABOUT IT

How did Zal's unusual childhood shape who he became?

HERO 5 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

HERO



LEGENDARY

ROSTAM

رستم

Shield of Iran, champion of the Seven Trials

HERO 7 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

HERO



RAKSHSH

رخش

The horse only Rostam could ride

HERO 8 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

HERO



TAHMINAH

تهمینه

The princess of Samangan, mother of Sohrab

HERO 9 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

HERO



SOHRAB

سهراب

The son who never knew his father

HERO 10 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

RAKSHSH

HERO

Rostam's legendary horse and faithful companion. No other rider could bear his strength. Fiercely devoted, Rakhsh once saved Rostam's life during the Seven Trials by killing a lion while his master slept. A hero in his own right.

BLOODLINE

Rider Rostam

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ No other rider could withstand my strength.
- ★★ I killed a lion while my master slept.
- ★ Rostam is my rider.

THINK ABOUT IT

Can an animal be a hero? Why or why not?

HERO 8 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ROSTAM

HERO

The greatest hero of the Shahnameh. Son of Zal and Rudabeh, Rostam completed the legendary Seven Trials, slew dragons and demons, and defended Iran across generations. His horse Rakhsh was nearly as famous as he was.

BLOODLINE

Father Zal • Mother Rudabeh • Son Sohrab

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I completed the Seven Trials.
- ★★ My horse is Rakhsh.
- ★ I am the greatest hero of the Shahnameh.

THINK ABOUT IT

What makes Rostam a hero besides his strength?

HERO 7 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SOHRAB

HERO

Rostam's son grew up in Turan never knowing his father's identity. He became a great warrior and set out to find him, and they met in battle, neither knowing the other. Rostam killed his own son before learning the truth.

BLOODLINE

Father Rostam • Mother Tahmineh

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ My father is Rostam.
- ★★ I grew up without knowing who he was.
- ★ I met him in battle.

THINK ABOUT IT

What could have prevented Sohrab's tragedy?

HERO 10 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

TAHMINEH

HERO

The princess who sought out Rostam and became his secret wife. She raised their son Sohrab alone in Samangan, keeping his existence hidden from Rostam to protect him. Her choice, made from love and fear, led to the epic's greatest tragedy.

BLOODLINE

Husband Rostam • Son Sohrab • Home Samangan

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I sought out a legendary hero in the night.
- ★★ I raised my son alone in Samangan.
- ★ Sohrab was my son.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why did Tahmineh hide the truth, and was she right to?

HERO 9 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

HERO

GORDAFARID
گردآفرید

The warrior maiden who faced Sobrab

HERO 11 OF 19
EPIC OF KINGS

HERO

PIRAN
پیران

The honorable general of Turan

HERO 12 OF 19
EPIC OF KINGS

HERO

SIAVASH
سیاوش

The prince who rode through fire

HERO 13 OF 19
EPIC OF KINGS

HERO

GUDARZ
گودرز

The general who served for generations

HERO 14 OF 19
EPIC OF KINGS

PIRAN

HERO

The most honorable general in all of Turan. Piran served Afrasiyab faithfully but never lost his conscience. He sheltered the exiled Siavash and secretly raised the infant Kay Khosrow to keep him safe.

BLOODLINE

Served Afrasiyab • **Protected** Siavash and Kay Khosrow

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I served Afrasiyab but kept my conscience.
- ★★ I sheltered Siavash in Turan.
- ★ I raised the hidden child Kay Khosrow.

THINK ABOUT IT

Can someone on the wrong side of a war still be good?

HERO 12 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

GORDAFARID

HERO

A Persian noblewoman who donned armor and rode out alone against Sohrab when no man would face him. She fought brilliantly and escaped by cunning when she was finally unhorsed. Her name means born of heroes.

BLOODLINE

Fought Sohrab • **Name means** born of heroes

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ My name means born of heroes.
- ★★ I rode out to battle when no man would.
- ★ I dueled Sohrab and escaped by cunning.

THINK ABOUT IT

What kind of courage does Gordafarid show?

HERO 11 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

GUDARZ

HERO

One of the greatest Persian generals, Gudarz commanded armies across generations and led a vast family of warrior sons devoted to Persia. His son Giv searched Turan alone for seven years to find the hidden prince Kay Khosrow.

BLOODLINE

Son Giv • **Served** many kings of Iran

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I commanded Persia's armies across generations.
- ★★ My many sons all fought for Iran.
- ★ My son Giv searched seven years for Kay Khosrow.

THINK ABOUT IT

What does loyalty across generations look like?

HERO 14 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SIAVASH

HERO

A prince of extraordinary virtue, falsely accused by his stepmother Sudabeh. He proved his innocence by riding through fire unharmed, then chose exile over dishonor. His murder in Turan sparked one of the epic's great wars.

BLOODLINE

Father Kay Kavus • **Son** Kay Khosrow • **Murdered by** Afrasiyab

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I rode through fire.
- ★★ Sudabeh falsely accused me.
- ★ Kay Khosrow is my son.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why does Siavash choose peace even when others choose conflict?

HERO 13 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

HERO



LEGENDARY

GIV
گیو

The knight of the seven-year search

HERO 15 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

HERO



BIJAN
بیژن

The hero imprisoned in a well

HERO 16 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

HERO



MANIJEH
منیژه

The princess who gave up everything for love

HERO 17 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

HERO



LEGENDARY

ESFANDIYAR
اسفندیار

The nearly invincible prince

HERO 18 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

BIJAN

HERO

A young hero trapped by Afrasiyab after secretly entering Turan to hunt wild boars. Imprisoned in a deep well sealed with a great stone, he survived on Manijeh's devotion until Rostam came to lift the stone and free him.

BLOODLINE

Love Manijeh • Rescuer Rostam • Captor Afrasiyab

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I entered Turan to hunt wild boars.
- ★★ A princess kept me alive in a well.
- ★ Rostam lifted the stone that sealed me.

THINK ABOUT IT

Who shows more courage in this story, Bijan or Manijeh?

HERO 16 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

GIV

HERO

Son of the great general Gudarz, Giv crossed alone into Turan and searched for seven long years until he found the hidden prince Kay Khosrow and brought him home to Iran. His quest is the epic's greatest act of loyalty that never gives up.

BLOODLINE

Father Gudarz • Found Kay Khosrow

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I searched an enemy land for seven years.
- ★★ My father is the general Gudarz.
- ★ I brought the hidden prince Kay Khosrow home.

THINK ABOUT IT

How long would you keep searching for something that matters?

HERO 15 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ESFANDIYAR

HERO

A prince made nearly invincible by divine blessing; only his eyes could be harmed. His father sent him to bring Rostam in chains, forcing two great heroes into a battle neither wanted, with devastating consequences.

BLOODLINE

Father Goshtasp • Fated foe Rostam

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Divine blessing made me nearly invincible.
- ★★ Only my eyes could be harmed.
- ★ My father sent me to battle Rostam.

THINK ABOUT IT

When duty and conscience clash, which should win?

HERO 18 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

MANIJEH

HERO

A princess of Turan who fell in love with the Persian hero Bijan. When her father Afrasiyab discovered it, she was cast out and begged for bread to feed the imprisoned Bijan. Her devotion brought about his rescue.

BLOODLINE

Father Afrasiyab • Love Bijan

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I loved Bijan.
- ★★ I gave up palace life to keep him alive.
- ★ My father was Afrasiyab.

THINK ABOUT IT

What did Manijeh sacrifice for love?

HERO 17 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

HERO



FERDOWSI

فردوسی

The poet who saved the stories

HERO 19 OF 19

EPIC OF KINGS

VILLAIN



AHRIMAN

اهریمن

The spirit of darkness itself

VILLAIN 1 OF 7

EPIC OF KINGS

VILLAIN



ZAHHAK

ضحاک

The Serpent King, a thousand years of darkness

VILLAIN 2 OF 7

EPIC OF KINGS

VILLAIN



SALM AND TUR

سلم و تور

The brothers who murdered a brother

VILLAIN 3 OF 7

EPIC OF KINGS

AHRIMAN

VILLAIN

The great spirit of evil in Zoroastrian mythology, opposite of Ahura Mazda. Ahriman works through corruption and deception rather than open battle. It was his kiss on Zahhak's shoulders that made the serpents grow.

CONNECTED TO

Opposite of Ahura Mazda • Corrupted Zahhak

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I work through whispers and corruption.
- ★★ My kiss gave a king his serpents.
- ★ I am the spirit of darkness itself.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why does the epic make evil work through trickery instead of force?

VILLAIN 1 OF 7

EPICOFKINGS.COM

FERDOWSI

HERO

The great poet spent thirty years composing the Shahnameh, often called the longest epic ever written by a single author. According to later tradition, Sultan Mahmud underpaid him and he died in near-poverty, but his poem has outlasted every king who slighted him.

BLOODLINE

Wrote the Shahnameh • Labored 30 years

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I worked thirty years on a single poem.
- ★★ A sultan is said to have paid me a fraction of what he promised.
- ★ I wrote the Shahnameh.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why do words outlast kings?

HERO 19 OF 19

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SALM AND TUR

VILLAIN

The two elder sons of Fereydun. When their brother Iraj willingly surrendered his portion of the kingdom to keep peace, they killed him anyway. Their crime set off the cycle of vengeance that echoes through the epic.

CONNECTED TO

Father Fereydun • Victim Iraj

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ We envied our youngest brother's portion.
- ★★ Our father was the great Fereydun.
- ★ We murdered Iraj.

THINK ABOUT IT

What does envy do to families?

VILLAIN 3 OF 7

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ZAHHAK

VILLAIN

The most fearsome tyrant in the Shahnameh. Corrupted by Ahriman, whose kiss caused two serpents to grow from his shoulders, Zahhak ruled for a thousand dark years until Kaveh rose in revolt and Fereydun chained him beneath Mount Damavand.

CONNECTED TO

Corrupted by Ahriman • Defied by Kaveh • Defeated by Fereydun

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I ruled Persia for a thousand years.
- ★★ A blacksmith's apron became the banner of revolt against me.
- ★ Serpents grew from my shoulders.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why do you think Zahhak was chained instead of killed?

VILLAIN 2 OF 7

EPICOFKINGS.COM

VILLAIN

AFRASIYAB

افراسیاب

King of Turan, Persia's most enduring enemy

VILLAIN 4 OF 7

EPIC OF KINGS

VILLAIN

SUDABEH

سودابه

The queen whose lie sent a prince through fire

VILLAIN 5 OF 7

EPIC OF KINGS

VILLAIN

GARSIVAZ

گرسیوز

The whisperer whose words killed a prince

VILLAIN 6 OF 7

EPIC OF KINGS

VILLAIN

SHAGHAD

شغاد

The brother who betrayed Rostam

VILLAIN 7 OF 7

EPIC OF KINGS

SUDABEH

VILLAIN

The queen of Persia became dangerously obsessed with her stepson Siavash and, when he refused her, falsely accused him before the king. Her lie forced Siavash into the trial by fire and ultimately into the exile that cost his life.

CONNECTED TO

Husband Kay Kavus • **Accused** Siavash • **Home** Hamavaran

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I came from the kingdom of Hamavaran.
- ★★ My lie sent a prince through fire.
- ★ I falsely accused Siavash.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why are false words so dangerous?

VILLAIN 5 OF 7

EPICOFKINGS.COM

AFRASIYAB

VILLAIN

The cunning and ruthless king of Turan who ordered the murder of the innocent Siavash. His conflict with Persia spans generations, yet the Shahnameh grants him a certain tragic grandeur even in defeat.

CONNECTED TO

Kingdom Turan • **Victim** Siavash • **Defeated by** Kay Khosrow

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I ruled Turan.
- ★★ I was the great enemy of Iran.
- ★ Kay Khosrow finally defeated me.

THINK ABOUT IT

Is Afrasiyab simply a villain, or does the epic make him more complicated?

VILLAIN 4 OF 7

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SHAGHAD

VILLAIN

Rostam's treacherous half-brother conspired to dig a well of iron spikes to trap and kill him. Even mortally wounded, Rostam pinned Shaghad to a tree with his final arrow. His is the epic's ultimate betrayal.

CONNECTED TO

Half-brother Rostam • **Conspired with the king of** Kabul

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Jealousy of my own brother consumed me.
- ★★ I dug a well lined with iron spikes.
- ★ I betrayed the greatest hero of Persia.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why is betrayal by family the deepest wound?

VILLAIN 7 OF 7

EPICOFKINGS.COM

GARSIVAZ

VILLAIN

Afrasiyab's brother and the epic's most poisonous schemer. Jealous of the noble Siavash, he whispered lies into the king's ear until Siavash was murdered. His words, not his sword, did the deadliest damage.

CONNECTED TO

Brother Afrasiyab • **Victim** Siavash

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ My weapon was whispered words.
- ★★ I am Afrasiyab's brother.
- ★ My lies doomed the innocent Siavash.

THINK ABOUT IT

Can words do more damage than swords?

VILLAIN 6 OF 7

EPICOFKINGS.COM

CREATURE

ZAHHAK'S SERPENTS

ماران ضحاک

Tyranny that devours its own people

CREATURE 1 OF 6

EPIC OF KINGS

CREATURE

SIMORGH

سیمرغ

The wise bird of Mount Qaf, keeper of the ages

CREATURE 2 OF 6

EPIC OF KINGS

CREATURE

THE WHITE DIV

دیو سپید

King of the demons of Mazandaran

CREATURE 3 OF 6

EPIC OF KINGS

CREATURE

AZHDAHA

اژدها

The great dragon of Persian myth

CREATURE 4 OF 6

EPIC OF KINGS

SIMORGH

CREATURE

The mythical bird of Persian legend, ancient beyond measure and wise beyond all creatures. She raised the abandoned infant Zal and later saved both Zal and Rostam in their greatest trials. Burning her feather summons her instantly.

CONNECTED TO

Raised Zal • **Aided** Rostam • **Home** Mount Qaf

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I am ancient and wise.
- ★★ My feather can summon me.
- ★ I raised Zal.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why is wisdom sometimes more useful than strength?

CREATURE 2 OF 6

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ZAHHAK'S SERPENTS

CREATURE

The two serpents that grew from Zahhak's shoulders after Ahriman's kiss, soothed only by a terrible daily meal. They became a symbol of tyranny consuming its own people, and they wait, chained with their king, beneath Damavand.

CONNECTED TO

Grew from Zahhak • **Created by** Ahriman's kiss

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ We grew from a king's shoulders.
- ★★ Only a terrible daily meal could calm us.
- ★ Ahriman's kiss created us.

THINK ABOUT IT

What do the serpents tell us about tyranny?

CREATURE 1 OF 6

EPICOFKINGS.COM

AZHDAHA

CREATURE

The great fire-breathing dragon of Persian mythology, guardian of treasures and sacred places. Rostam slays a dragon during his Seven Trials. The Azhdaha stands for the primal chaos every hero must overcome.

CONNECTED TO

Guards treasure and sacred places • **Faced by** Rostam

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I guard treasures and sacred places.
- ★★ I breathe fire across the hero's path.
- ★ Rostam slew one of my kind in his Trials.

THINK ABOUT IT

What do dragons stand for in hero stories?

CREATURE 4 OF 6

EPICOFKINGS.COM

THE WHITE DIV

CREATURE

The most powerful creature Rostam ever faced. His black magic blinded Kay Kavus and his whole army, and only the White Div's blood could restore their sight. Their battle in his mountain lair was Rostam's most terrible trial.

CONNECTED TO

Realm Mazandaran • **Blinded** Kay Kavus's army • **Slain by** Rostam

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I ruled the demons of Mazandaran.
- ★★ My magic blinded a king and his army.
- ★ Rostam's final trial was me.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why must the hardest trial come last?

CREATURE 3 OF 6

EPICOFKINGS.COM

CREATURE



AKVAN DIV

اکوان دیو

The demon who does the opposite

CREATURE 5 OF 6

EPIC OF KINGS

CREATURE



HOMA BIRD

هما

The bird whose shadow crowns kings

CREATURE 6 OF 6

EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE



IRAN

ایران

The homeland the heroes defend

PLACE 1 OF 15

EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE



MOUNT DAMAVAND

دماوند

The mountain that imprisons Zabhak

PLACE 2 OF 15

EPIC OF KINGS

HOMA BIRD

CREATURE

The sacred bird whose shadow, falling on a person, confers royalty and great fortune. The Homa never lands, flying eternally through the heavens. Kings were said to rule because her shadow had blessed them.

CONNECTED TO

Grants royal fortune • Never lands on earth

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ My shadow crowns kings.
- ★★ I never land upon the earth.
- ★ I am the bird of fortune.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why did people want kingship to come from the sky?

CREATURE 6 OF 6

EPICOFKINGS.COM

AKVAN DIV

CREATURE

A monstrous demon who carried the sleeping Rostam into the sky on a lifted patch of earth, then offered to throw him onto mountains or into the sea. Knowing a div does the opposite of what is asked, Rostam begged for the mountains, was thrown into the sea, and swam free.

CONNECTED TO

Tricked by Rostam

WHO AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I always do the opposite of what I am asked.
- ★★ I carried a sleeping hero into the sky.
- ★ Rostam tricked me into throwing him to the sea.

THINK ABOUT IT

How did Rostam turn knowledge into survival?

CREATURE 5 OF 6

EPICOFKINGS.COM

MOUNT DAMAVAND

PLACE

The great volcanic peak at the heart of Persian mythology, where Fereydun chained the tyrant Zahhak in a cave for eternity. The highest mountain in Iran, it has stood as a symbol of Persian identity and resistance for thousands of years.

CONNECTED TO

Fereydun • Zahhak

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I am the highest peak of the land.
- ★★ A tyrant waits chained inside me.
- ★ Fereydun sealed Zahhak beneath me.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why chain evil away instead of destroying it?

PLACE 2 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

IRAN

PLACE

The heartland of the Shahnameh, blessed with the divine Farr, the royal glory that marks rightful rule. Almost every battle in the epic is ultimately about protecting Iran and its people from chaos and tyranny.

CONNECTED TO

Rostam • the kings of Iran • the pahlavans

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Every battle ultimately defends me.
- ★★ The divine Farr blesses my rightful kings.
- ★ I am the homeland of the heroes.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why is home worth defending?

PLACE 1 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PLACE

ALBORZ MOUNTAINS
البرز

Where the human world meets the mythic

PLACE 3 OF 15
EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE

KABUL
کابل

Home of Rudabel, root of Rostam

PLACE 4 OF 15
EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE

ZABULISTAN & SISTAN
زابلستان و سیستان

Homeland of Rostam's dynasty

PLACE 5 OF 15
EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE

MAZANDARAN
مازندران

The demon-haunted kingdom

PLACE 6 OF 15
EPIC OF KINGS

KABUL

PLACE

The home of Rudabeh, whose father descended from Zahhak. Her marriage to Zal made Rostam's birth a merging of the darkest and brightest bloodlines in Persian mythology, proof that heroes and enemies share the same roots.

CONNECTED TO

Rudabeh • Zal • Rostam

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ My princess loved a white-haired hero.
- ★★ My rulers descend from Zahhak himself.
- ★ I am Rudabeh's home.

THINK ABOUT IT

What does Rostam's mixed bloodline tell us about good and evil?

PLACE 4 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ALBORZ MOUNTAINS

PLACE

The sacred range across northern Persia where the infant Zal was abandoned and raised by the Simorgh, and whose highest peak holds Zahhak in his chains. The Alborz is the boundary between the human world and the realm of myth.

CONNECTED TO

Zal • Simorgh • Zahhak

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Zal was raised here.
- ★★ Zahhak is chained beneath my highest peak.
- ★ I am a great mountain range.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why do myths so often live in mountains?

PLACE 3 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

MAZANDARAN

PLACE

The most fearsome realm of the epic. When Kay Kavus foolishly led his army here, the White Div blinded them all with black magic, and only Rostam's Seven Trials could break the spell and free the king.

CONNECTED TO

Kay Kavus • Rostam • the White Div

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Kay Kavus came here against all advice.
- ★★ The White Div blinded an army here.
- ★ Rostam's Seven Trials led here.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why does its geography matter to the story?

PLACE 6 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ZABULISTAN & SISTAN

PLACE

The rugged southeastern homeland of Sam's dynasty, where Zal was born with his white hair and Rostam grew into the greatest champion of Persian legend. The city of Zabul was their seat of power.

CONNECTED TO

Sam • Zal • Rostam

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Sam's dynasty calls me home.
- ★★ My city of Zabul raised champions.
- ★ Rostam grew up here.

THINK ABOUT IT

How does a place shape a hero?

PLACE 5 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PLACE



SAMANGAN

سمنگان

Where a love story planted a tragedy

PLACE 7 OF 15

EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE



HAMAVARAN

هاماوران

The kingdom of the false surrender

PLACE 8 OF 15

EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE



TURAN

توران

Iran's great rival across the river

PLACE 9 OF 15

EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE



OXUS / JEYHUN

جيحون

The river border of two worlds

PLACE 10 OF 15

EPIC OF KINGS

HAMAVARAN

PLACE

A kingdom by the sea whose king pretended to surrender to Kay Kavus, then trapped him. It was also the homeland of Sudabeh, who chose to share the king's imprisonment. Rostam marched here to break the trap.

CONNECTED TO

Kay Kavus • Sudabeh • Rostam

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ My king faked a surrender to set a trap.
- ★★ Sudabeh was my princess.
- ★ Kay Kavus was captured here.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why is betrayal under a flag of peace so serious?

PLACE 8 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SAMANGAN

PLACE

The city where Rostam, having lost Rakhsh nearby, was welcomed as a guest and met the princess Tahmineh. From their brief union came Sohrab, the son who would one day face his father in battle unknowing.

CONNECTED TO

Rostam • Tahmineh • Sohrab

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Rostam met Tahmineh near me.
- ★★ Sohrab's story began here.
- ★ I am a city in Turan.

THINK ABOUT IT

How can joy and tragedy share one beginning?

PLACE 7 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

OXUS / JEYHUN

PLACE

The mighty river dividing Iran from Turan. For generations, armies crossed it to make war and heroes forded it on secret missions. When Siavash went into exile, it was the Oxus he crossed.

CONNECTED TO

Iran • Turan • Siavash

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I am a river.
- ★★ Armies crossed me between Iran and Turan.
- ★ I am also called the Jeyhun.

THINK ABOUT IT

Why do rivers make such powerful borders?

PLACE 10 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

TURAN

PLACE

The great kingdom to the north and east, ruled for centuries by the cunning Afrasiyab. Persia and Turan clash in wars spanning generations, and many of the epic's greatest tragedies, including the murder of Siavash, unfold here.

CONNECTED TO

Afrasiyab • Siavash • Kay Khosrow

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ The Oxus divides me from my great rival.
- ★★ Siavash found both refuge and death in me.
- ★ Afrasiyab ruled me for centuries.

THINK ABOUT IT

Are the people of Iran and Turan really so different?

PLACE 9 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PLACE

GANG DEZH
گنگ در

The paradise built by a doomed prince

PLACE 11 OF 15
EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE

BALKH
بلخ

The mother of cities

PLACE 12 OF 15
EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE

PERSEPOLIS
تخت جمشید

Ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire

PLACE 13 OF 15
EPIC OF KINGS

PLACE

RUM (ROME)
روم

The western edge of the known world

PLACE 14 OF 15
EPIC OF KINGS

BALKH

PLACE

One of the most ancient cities of the Persian world, the seat of King Goshtasp and the place tied to the coming of Zoroaster and his new faith. Here religion, kingship, and the deeds of heroes like Esfandiyar come together.

CONNECTED TO

Goshtasp • Zoroaster • Esfandiyar

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I am called the mother of cities.
- ★★ Zoroaster's faith reached kings within me.
- ★ Goshtasp ruled from me.

THINK ABOUT IT

How do faith and power shape one city?

PLACE 12 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

GANG DEZH

PLACE

The beautiful fortress-city built by the exiled Siavash in Turan, a place of safety far from his enemies. After his murder it became a symbol of the paradise that was lost, a perfect city built by a gentle, doomed hero.

CONNECTED TO

Siavash • Kay Khosrow

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ A gentle prince built me in enemy lands.
- ★★ I recall a paradise that was lost.
- ★ Siavash raised my walls.

THINK ABOUT IT

What might have been if Siavash had lived?

PLACE 11 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

RUM (ROME)

PLACE

In the Shahnameh, Rum is the Roman world to the west. Persian kings deal with its rulers in diplomacy and war, part of the epic's vision of Persia at the center of a wide, connected world.

CONNECTED TO

diplomacy and war • compare with Chin

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I lie west of the Persian world.
- ★★ My rulers traded and warred with the shahs.
- ★ To Persia, I am Rome.

THINK ABOUT IT

How did the Persians see their neighbors?

PLACE 14 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSEPOLIS

PLACE

The magnificent ceremonial capital built by Darius the Great around 518 BCE, with grand staircases, towering columns, and carvings of tribute from across the empire. Alexander burned it in 330 BCE, but its ruins still stand.

CONNECTED TO

Darius the Great • the Persian Empire

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ Alexander's soldiers were stunned silent before me.
- ★★ Darius the Great began building me around 518 BCE.
- ★ I am the ceremonial capital of the empire.

THINK ABOUT IT

What do ruins teach us that whole buildings cannot?

PLACE 13 OF 15

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PLACE



CHIN (CHINA)

چین

The eastern edge of the known world

PLACE 15 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

پهلوان

PAHLAVAN

PAH · LA · VAAN

WORD 1 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

فر

FARR

FARR

WORD 2 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

شاهنامه

SHAHNAMEH

Shah · NAA · meh

WORD 3 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

A CHAMPION WARRIOR

A hero of extraordinary bravery, strength, and honor. The greatest pahlavans are celebrated as the protectors of Iran.

Chin is China, the great empire at the eastern edge of the Shahnameh's world, reached by the Silk Road. With Rum to the west and Turan to the north, it completes the epic's remarkable map of a connected ancient world.

CONNECTED TO

the Silk Road • compare with Rum

WHERE AM I? — READ CLUES ALOUD

- ★★★ I mark the eastern edge of the known world.
- ★★ The Silk Road reached me.
- ★ To Persia, I am China.

THINK ABOUT IT

What made the ancient world feel connected?

THE BOOK OF KINGS

The greatest epic poem in the Persian language, written by Ferdowsi over 30 years, with some 50,000 verses.

DIVINE ROYAL GLORY

A divine radiance marking rightful kings and heroes. When a ruler loses the Farr, their kingdom falls.

PERSIAN WORD

درفش

DERAFSH

De · RAFSH

WORD 4 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

هفتخان

HAFT KHAN

Haft · KHAAN

WORD 5 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

دادگر

DADGAR

daad · GAR

WORD 6 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

گرز

GORZ

GORZ

WORD 7 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

THE SEVEN TRIALS

The legendary challenges Rostam overcomes on his journey to save the king. Each trial is more dangerous than the last.

A ROYAL BATTLE BANNER

The most famous is the Derafsh Kaviani, made from Kaveh's leather apron, which flew over the armies of Iran for generations.

A WAR MACE

A heavy club weapon. Rostam's gorz was so heavy that no ordinary man could even lift it off the ground.

A JUST RULER

A ruler who governs with fairness, wisdom, and compassion. Being called a dadgar king is the highest praise in the Shahnameh.

PERSIAN WORD

تخت

TAKHT

TAKHT

WORD 8 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

تاج

TAJ

TAAJ

WORD 9 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

آتش

ATASH

AA · tash

WORD 10 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

خورشید

KHORSHID

Khor · SHEED

WORD 11 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

TAJ

تاج

A CROWN

The symbol of royal authority, placed on a new king's head in solemn ceremony. Its loss signals the fall of a kingdom.

WORD 9 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

TAKHT

تخت

A ROYAL THRONE

The seat of kings. Seizing the Takht means taking power over an entire kingdom.

WORD 8 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

KHORSHID

خورشید

THE SUN

A symbol of glory and kingship. Great heroes and kings are compared to the Khorshid rising, bringing light to the world.

WORD 11 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ATASH

آتش

FIRE

Sacred in Persian tradition. Fire temples were holy places representing truth, purity, and divine presence.

WORD 10 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

ماه

MAH

MAAH

WORD 12 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

دریا

DARYA

da · RYAA

WORD 13 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

کوه

KUH

KOOH

WORD 14 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

جنگ

JANG

JANG

WORD 15 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

DARYA

دریا

THE SEA, A GREAT RIVER

A boundary between worlds. The Darya of the Oxus separates Iran from Turan.

WORD 13 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

MAH

ماه

THE MOON

A symbol of beauty and mystery. Heroines are often compared to the full Mah shining in a dark sky.

WORD 12 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

JANG

جنگ

WAR, BATTLE

The central drama of the Shahnameh. Great Jangs between Iran and Turan fill the epic with action and tragedy.

WORD 15 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

KUH

کوه

A MOUNTAIN

A place of mystery and power. Mount Alborz is where the Simorgh lives; Mount Damavand imprisons Zahhak forever.

WORD 14 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

صلح

SOLH

SOLH

WORD 16 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

عدل

ADL

ADL

WORD 17 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

دوستی

DOOSTI

doos · TEE

WORD 18 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

دشمن

DOSHMAN

dosh · MAN

WORD 19 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

ADL

عدل

JUSTICE

One of the highest values in the Shahnameh. A king who upholds Adl will be remembered forever.

WORD 17 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SOLH

صلح

PEACE

Always precious and always fragile in the Shahnameh. Moments of Solh allow heroes to rest and people to flourish.

WORD 16 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

DOSHMAN

دشمن

AN ENEMY, A FOE

The Shahnameh is full of great Doshmans, but even enemies can possess courage that heroes must respect.

WORD 19 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

DOOSTI

دوستی

FRIENDSHIP, LOYALTY

Deeply important in the Shahnameh. The bonds of Doosti between warriors are tested in battle.

WORD 18 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

پیروزی

PIROOZI

pee · ROO · zee

WORD 20 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

شکست

SHEKAST

she · KAST

WORD 21 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

نوروز

NOWRUZ

No · ROOZ

WORD 22 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

آرمان

ARMAN

Aar · MAAN

WORD 23 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

SHEKAST

شکست

DEFEAT

How a hero responds to Shekast reveals their true character more than any victory ever could.

WORD 21 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PIROOZI

پیروزی

VICTORY

The reward for courage and perseverance. True Piroozi means upholding justice, not just defeating an enemy.

WORD 20 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ARMAN

آرمان

A NOBLE IDEAL

The dream of a better world that drives the Shahnameh's heroes forward.

WORD 23 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

NOWRUZ

نوروز

THE PERSIAN NEW YEAR

Celebrated on the first day of spring. King Jamshid established Nowruz when he ascended the sky on a jeweled throne. Still celebrated today!

WORD 22 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

شجاعت

SHOJAAT

sho · JAA · at

WORD 24 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

خرد

KHERAD

khe · RAD

WORD 25 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

راستی

RASTI

raas · TEE

WORD 26 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

آزادی

AZADI

Aa · ZAA · dee

WORD 27 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

KHERAD

خرد

WISDOM, REASON

Prized above all qualities. A hero with great Kherad can find solutions that brute strength never could.

WORD 25 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SHOJAAT

شجاعت

BRAVERY, VALOR

Shojaat is not the absence of fear but the choice to act rightly despite it.

WORD 24 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

AZADI

آزادی

FREEDOM

What the heroes of the Shahnameh ultimately fight for. Liberation from tyrants like Zahhak is the epic's great theme.

WORD 27 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

RASTI

راستی

TRUTHFULNESS

A core virtue: living honestly and in alignment with what is right.

WORD 26 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

افتخار

EFTEKHAR

Ef · te · KHAAR

WORD 28 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

دل

DEL

DEL

WORD 29 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

جان

JAN

JAAN

WORD 30 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

آب

AB

AAB

WORD 31 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

DEL

دل

THE HEART

The center of courage, love, and feeling in Persian poetry. A great Del means brave, passionate, and full of life.

WORD 29 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

EFTEKHAR

افتخار

PRIDE, HONOR

The dignity warriors protect above all things. To lose one's Eftekhar is worse than death for a true pahlavan.

WORD 28 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

AB

آب

WATER

Life-giving throughout the Shahnameh. Great rivers and oases shape battles and journeys.

WORD 31 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

JAN

جان

THE SOUL, LIFE-FORCE

The divine spark within every living being. Heroes willingly risk their Jan for Iran and the people they love.

WORD 30 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

باد

BAD
BAAD

WORD 32 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

زمین

ZAMIN
Za · MEEN

WORD 33 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

آسمان

ASEMAN
Aas · MAAN

WORD 34 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

ستاره

SETAREH
Se · TAA · reh

WORD 35 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

ZAMIN

زمین

THE EARTH, THE LAND

Something precious and worth protecting.
Heroes shed blood to defend their Zamin
from invaders.

WORD 33 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

BAD

باد

WIND

Often invoked for speed and freedom.
Swift as the Bad is high praise for a warrior
or horse.

WORD 32 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SETAREH

ستاره

A STAR

Signs of fate and prophecy. Wise
astrologers read the Setareh to predict
the births of heroes and the outcomes of
battles.

WORD 35 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ASEMAN

آسمان

THE SKY, THE HEAVENS

The realm of divine power and fate. The
Aseman rewards the just and punishes the
wicked.

WORD 34 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

شب

SHAB

SHAB

WORD 36 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

روز

ROOZ

ROOZ

WORD 37 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

گنج

GANJ

GANJ

WORD 38 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

دژ

DEZH

DEZH

WORD 39 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

ROOZ

روز

DAY

The time of action, glory, and decision. The Rooz of battle means the moment when everything is at stake.

WORD 37 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

SHAB

شب

NIGHT

A time of danger and great deeds. Many of the epic's most dramatic moments happen in the darkness of Shab.

WORD 36 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

DEZH

دژ

A FORTRESS

Many great Shahnameh stories involve heroes besieging or escaping from a fearsome Dezh.

WORD 39 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

GANJ

گنج

TREASURE

The epic teaches that the greatest treasure is not gold but courage, loyalty, and wisdom.

WORD 38 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

لشکر

LASHKAR

LASH · kar

WORD 40 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

زره

ZEREH

Zeh · REH

WORD 41 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

کان

KAMAN

Ka · MAAN

WORD 42 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

تیر

TIR

TEER

WORD 43 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

ZEREH

زره

ARMOR

The protective covering worn by warriors, crafted by master smiths and sometimes enchanted.

WORD 41 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

LASHKAR

لشکر

AN ARMY

The great forces that clash across the epic's battlefields. When the king falls, the Lashkar scatters like leaves.

WORD 40 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

TIR

تیر

AN ARROW

Swift, precise, and deadly. The Tir decides some of the epic's most dramatic battles with a single shot.

WORD 43 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

KAMAN

کمان

A BOW

One of the great weapons of the Shahnameh. Persian archers were among the finest in the ancient world.

WORD 42 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

اسب

ASB

ASB

WORD 44 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

پر

PAR

PAR

WORD 45 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

آهنگر

AHANGAR

Aa · han · GAR

WORD 46 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

پادشاه

PADSHAH

Paa · de · SHAAH

WORD 47 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PAR

پر

A FEATHER

The magical feather of the Simorgh that Zal carries. By burning a Par, he can call the great bird to his aid.

WORD 45 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

ASB

اسب

A HORSE

Essential to every Shahnameh warrior. A great Asb like Rakhsh is almost as famous as its rider.

WORD 44 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PADSHAH

پادشاه

A KING, A GREAT RULER

The Shahnameh judges every Padshah by how they treat their people.

WORD 47 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

AHANGAR

آهنگر

A BLACKSMITH

A worker of iron and fire. The blacksmith Kaveh became a hero by standing up to the tyrant Zahhak.

WORD 46 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

وزیر

VAZIR

Va · ZEER

WORD 48 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

شاعر

SHAER

shaa · ER

WORD 49 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

دانش

DANESH

daa · NESH

WORD 50 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

امید

OMID

o · MEED

WORD 51 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

SHAER

شاعر

A POET

The keeper of memory and truth. Ferdowsi believed poetry could preserve a civilization forever.

WORD 49 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

VAZIR

وزیر

A ROYAL ADVISOR

A good Vazir can save a kingdom; a bad one can destroy it.

WORD 48 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

OMID

امید

HOPE

The quality that keeps heroes going through defeat and darkness. Without Omid, no journey can be completed.

WORD 51 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

DANESH

دانش

KNOWLEDGE, LEARNING

Treasured in Persian culture. The Shahnameh honors heroes who are wise as well as brave.

WORD 50 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

PERSIAN WORD

نام

NAM
NAAM

WORD 52 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

پیمان

PEYMAN
pay · MAAN

WORD 53 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

بزم

BAZM
BAZM

WORD 54 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PERSIAN WORD

رزم

RAZM
RAZM

WORD 55 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PEYMAN

پیمان

A SACRED OATH

Breaking a Peyman is one of the gravest acts a hero or king can commit. Oaths define the moral code of the epic.

WORD 53 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

NAM

نام

NAME, REPUTATION

One of the epic's most sacred ideas. A hero lives and dies for their Nam; losing it is worse than death.

WORD 52 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

RAZM

رزم

BATTLE, COMBAT

The central arena of the Shahnameh. Where there is Razm, there is fate.

WORD 55 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

BAZM

بزم

A ROYAL FEAST

The joyful twin of Razm. Heroes who fight by day feast by night, and a great king is judged by how he holds both.

WORD 54 OF 55

EPICOFKINGS.COM

WONDERS OF PERSIA

What clay object from 539 BCE is often called one of the earliest declarations of human rights?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 1 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

Roughly what share of the entire world's population lived in the Persian Empire at its height?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 2 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

Which Persian faith, over 3,000 years old, teaches good thoughts, good words, and good deeds?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 3 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

The words “algebra” and “algorithm” both trace back to which Persian mathematician?

?

GOLDEN AGE

WONDER 4 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

ABOUT 44 PERCENT

By some estimates the empire was home to roughly 49 million people, about 44% of everyone alive at the time, which may be the largest share of humanity any empire has ever ruled!

THE CYRUS CYLINDER

When Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon, he let exiled peoples return to their homelands and worship their own gods, and recorded his decree on a clay cylinder. Among those freed were the Jews of Babylon, and the Bible even calls Cyrus the Lord's anointed. A replica of the cylinder sits in the UN headquarters in New York to this day.

AL-KHWARIZMI

Known as the father of algebra, al-Khwarizmi (800-850 CE) wrote the book whose title gave algebra its name, and his own name gave us the word algorithm. Every math class owes him a thank you!

ZOROASTRIANISM

Founded by the prophet Zoroaster, it is one of the world's oldest religions and considered by many to be among the first centered on one supreme God. Many scholars believe it influenced Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

WONDERS OF PERSIA

Around 1000 CE, which Persian scholar measured the Earth's circumference with nothing but math?

?

GOLDEN AGE

WONDER 5 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

Whose medical encyclopedia was Europe's standard medical textbook for centuries?

?

GOLDEN AGE

WONDER 6 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

What Persian invention kept ice frozen in 40°C desert heat, over 2,400 years ago?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 7 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness..." describes which Persian invention?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 8 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

AVICENNA

The Persian doctor Avicenna wrote The Canon of Medicine around 1025 CE. He described diseases spreading through contaminated water and soil, centuries before anyone had heard the word germ.

BIRUNI

Using careful observation and pure mathematics, Biruni calculated the size of the Earth with astonishing accuracy. He even seriously debated whether the Earth itself moves, centuries before Copernicus.

THE CHAPAR KHANEH

The world's first relay postal system, with fresh horses every 25 km across the empire. Herodotus marveled at its couriers in words that inspired the famous inscription on New York's main post office.

THE YAKHCHAL

يخچال

Ancient Persians built underground domed structures that kept ice and food cold even in scorching desert heat. Yakh means ice, and the Persian word for refrigerator is still yakhchal today!

WONDERS OF PERSIA

Which everyday machine did Persians build first, about 500 years before Europe?

?

GOLDEN AGE

WONDER 9 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

How long did a royal message take to travel the 2,700 km Royal Road: 7 days or 90?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 10 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

What did Persian engineers dig to carry mountain water to desert cities, 3,000 years ago?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 11 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

Which language, over 2,500 years old, can its speakers still read in nearly its 1,000-year-old form?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 12 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

JUST 7 DAYS

With fresh horses stationed along the route from Sardis to Susa, royal messengers covered in a week what took ordinary travelers 90 days on foot. It was one of the fastest communication networks of the ancient world.

THE WINDMILL

Persians invented the world's first practical windmills around 500-900 CE, using a clever vertical-axis design, to grind grain and pump water on the windy Persian plateau.

PERSIAN (FARSI)

فارسی

One of the world's oldest continuously spoken languages. Unlike Latin, Persian is very much alive: some 130 million people speak it today in almost the same form Ferdowsi wrote a thousand years ago.

QANATS

Underground aqueducts, some 70 km long, brought water from distant mountains to desert cities. Amazingly, some qanats are thousands of years old and still flowing today.

WONDERS OF PERSIA

The English word “paradise” comes from which Persian word?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 13 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

Which 13th-century Persian mystic has been called one of the best-selling poets in America?

?

AGE OF POETS

WONDER 14 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

The chess word “checkmate” comes from what Persian phrase?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 15 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

Which beloved poet’s name means “memorizer,” a title for one who has memorized the entire Quran?

?

AGE OF POETS

WONDER 16 OF 18 EPIC OF KINGS

THE ANSWER

AGE OF POETS

RUMI

His poems about love, God, and the human soul have been translated into dozens of languages and have sold millions of copies. He lived 800 years ago and remains one of the most widely read poets in the world.

WONDER 14 OF 18

EPICOFKINGS.COM

THE ANSWER

AGE OF EMPIRES

PARDIS

پردیس

The word traces back to an ancient Iranian term for a walled garden, which lives on in Persian as pardis. Persian gardens, with flowing water, fruit trees, and geometric paths, were so beautiful they were admired by the ancient Greeks and echoed centuries later in the Mughal gardens of India.

WONDER 13 OF 18

EPICOFKINGS.COM

THE ANSWER

AGE OF POETS

HAFEZ

Hafez became one of the greatest lyric poets in Persian history. Nearly every Iranian home has his collected poems, and his verses are quoted daily almost like a second language.

WONDER 16 OF 18

EPICOFKINGS.COM

THE ANSWER

AGE OF EMPIRES

SHAH MAT

شاه مات

It means the king is helpless. The Persians are credited with spreading chess across the world, so every chess game echoes the Shahnameh.

WONDER 15 OF 18

EPICOFKINGS.COM

WONDERS OF PERSIA

What New Year celebration, one of the world's oldest, is still observed by over 300 million people?

?

AGE OF EMPIRES

WONDER 17 OF 18EPIC OF KINGS

WONDERS OF PERSIA

Which poem is credited with saving the Persian language itself?

?

GOLDEN AGE

WONDER 18 OF 18EPIC OF KINGS

THE SHAHNAMEH

شاهنامه

After the Arab conquest, Arabic began replacing Persian. Ferdowsi deliberately wrote his epic almost entirely in Persian, and his poem helped keep the language and its stories alive for every generation since.

NOWRUZ

نوروز

Celebrated for over 3,000 years on the first day of spring. According to the Shahnameh, it was established when King Jamshid ascended to the heavens on a jeweled throne and the world filled with light.