

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 fold-and-cut: print single-sided, cut out each strip, and fold along the dashed line so the back reads right-side up. Content follows the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi; spellings match epicofkings.com.

Legends of the Shahnameh

DECK ONE • KINGS, HEROES, VILLAINS, CREATURES



♦ KING ♦

KIUMARS کیومرث

The first king, father of civilization

KING 1 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What makes someone a good first leader?

THINK ABOUT IT

Son Siamak • Grandson Hooshang

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ KING ♦

HOOSHANG هوشنگ

Discoverer of fire, master of iron

KING 2 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Siamak • Grandfather Kiumars

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ KING ♦

TAHMORIS طهمورث

The Div-Binder

KING 3 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Can cleverness ever beat raw strength?

THINK ABOUT IT

Known as the Div-Binder • Gift to humanity writing

BLOODLINE

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



♦ KING ♦

JAMSHID جمشید

The king who founded Nowruz, then lost the Farr

KING 4 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why is pride so dangerous for leaders?

THINK ABOUT IT

BLOODLINE Founded Nowruz • Lost the Farr • Overthrown by Zahhak

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.



♦ KING ♦

FEREYDUN فریدون

The hero-king who chained Zahhak

KING 5 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

BLOODLINE Defeated Zahhak • Sons Salm, Tur, Iraj

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.



♦ KING ♦

MANUCHEHR منوچهر

The king who avenged Iraj

KING 6 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What is the difference between justice and revenge?

THINK ABOUT IT

BLOODLINE Descendant of Iraj • Champions Sam and Zal

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.



♦ KING ♦

KAY KAVUS کیکاووس

The brave but reckless king

KING 7 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Son Siavash • Grandson Kay Khosrow • Rescuer Rostam

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ KING ♦

KAY KHOSROW کیخسرو

The king who walked away from the throne

KING 8 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why might giving up power be a sign of strength?

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Siavash • Grandfather Kay Kavus • Defeated Afrasiyab

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ KING ♦

LOHRASP لهراسپ

Keeper of the hard-won peace

KING 9 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Is keeping the peace as heroic as winning a war?

THINK ABOUT IT

Succeeded Kay Khosrow • Son Goshasp

BLOODLINE

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 Goshasp would carry forward.



♦ KING ♦
GOSHTASP گشتاسپ

The king who embraced Zoroaster's faith
KING 10 OF 10 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

THINK ABOUT IT
Should a king ever put duty above his own child?

BLOODLINE
Son Estandiyar • City Balkh • Faith Zoroastrianism

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



♦ HERO ♦
SIAMAK سیامک

The prince of the first great battle
HERO 1 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

THINK ABOUT IT
Why do so many great stories begin with a great loss?

BLOODLINE
Father Kiumars • Son Hooshang

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.



♦ HERO ♦
KAVEH کاوه

The blacksmith whose apron became a banner
HERO 2 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

THINK ABOUT IT
Can an ordinary person become a hero? How?

BLOODLINE
Defied Zahhak • Banner Derash Kaviani • Ally Fereydun

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 Derash Kaviani, became the royal banner of Persia for centuries.



♦ HERO ♦

IRAJ ایرج

The prince killed for his own virtue

HERO 3 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Fereydun • Brothers Salm and Tur • Avenged by Manuchehr

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

SAM سام

The mighty champion who abandoned his son

HERO 4 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Son Zal • Grandson Rostam

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

ZAL زال

The white-haired sage, raised by the Simorgh

HERO 5 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Sam • Wife Rudabeh • Son Rostam

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

RUDABEH رودابه

The princess who chose love over custom

HERO 6 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Husband Zai • Son Rostam • Home Kabul

BLOODLINE

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



♦ HERO ♦

ROSTAM رستم

Shield of Iran, champion of the Seven Trials

HERO 7 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What makes Rostam a hero besides his strength?

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Zai • Mother Rudabeh • Son Sohrab

BLOODLINE

The greatest hero of the Shahnameh. Son of Zai 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.



♦ HERO ♦

RAKSHSH رخش

The horse only Rostam could ride

HERO 8 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Rider Rostam

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

TAHMINAH تهمینه

The princess of Samangan, mother of Sohrab

HERO 9 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Husband Rostam • Son Sohrab • Home Samangan

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

SOHRAB سهراب

The son who never knew his father

HERO 10 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What could have prevented Sohrab's tragedy?

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Rostam • Mother Tahmineh

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

GORDAFARID گردآفرید

The warrior maiden who faced Sohrab

HERO 11 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What kind of courage does Gordafarid show?

THINK ABOUT IT

Fought Sohrab • Name means born of heroes

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

PIRAN پیران

The honorable general of Turan

HERO 12 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Served Afrasiyab • Protected Siavash and Kay Khosrow

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

SIAVASH سیاوش

The prince who rode through fire

HERO 13 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why does Siavash choose peace even when others choose conflict?

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Kay Kavus • Son Kay Khosrow • Murdered by Afrasiyab

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

GUDARZ گودرز

The general who served for generations

HERO 14 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What does loyalty across generations look like?

THINK ABOUT IT

Son Giv • Served many kings of Iran

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

GIV گيو

The knight of the seven-year search

HERO 15 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

How long would you keep searching for something that matters?

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Gudarz • Found Kay Khosrow

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

BIJAN بيرژن

The hero imprisoned in a well

HERO 16 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Love Manijeh • Rescuer Rostam • Captor Afrasiyab

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

MANIJEH منيره

The princess who gave up everything for love

HERO 17 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What did Manijeh sacrifice for love?

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Afrasiyab • Love Bijan

BLOODLINE

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.



♦ HERO ♦

ESFANDIYAR اسفندیار

The nearly invincible prince

HERO 18 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

∞ fold

When duty and conscience clash, which should win?

THINK ABOUT IT

BLOODLINE Father Goshasp • Fated foe Rostam

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.



♦ HERO ♦

FERDOWSI فردوسی

The poet who saved the stories

HERO 19 OF 19 EPIC OF KINGS

∞ fold

Why do words outlast kings?

THINK ABOUT IT

BLOODLINE Wrote the Shahnameh • Labored 30 years

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.



♦ VILLAIN ♦

AHRIMAN اهریمن

The spirit of darkness itself

VILLAIN 1 OF 7 EPIC OF KINGS

∞ fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

CONNECTED TO Opposite of Ahura Mazda • Corrupted Zahhak

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.



♦ VILLAIN ♦
ZAHHAK ضحاک

The Serpent King, a thousand years of darkness

VILLAIN 2 OF 7 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why do you think Zahhak was chained instead of killed?

THINK ABOUT IT

Corrupted by Ahriman • Defied by Kaveh • Defeated by Fereydun

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ VILLAIN ♦
SALM AND TUR سلم و تور

The brothers who murdered a brother

VILLAIN 3 OF 7 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What does envy do to families?

THINK ABOUT IT

Father Fereydun • Victim Iraj

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ VILLAIN ♦
AFRASIYAB افراسیاب

King of Turan, Persia's most enduring enemy

VILLAIN 4 OF 7 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Kingdom Turan • Victim Siavash • Defeated by Kay Khosrow

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ VILLAIN ♦

SUDABEH سودابه

The queen whose lie sent a prince through fire

VILLAIN 5 OF 7 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why are false words so dangerous?

THINK ABOUT IT

Husband Kay Kavus • Accused Siavash • Home Hamavaran

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ VILLAIN ♦

GARSIVAZ گرسیوز

The whisperer whose words killed a prince

VILLAIN 6 OF 7 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Can words do more damage than swords?

THINK ABOUT IT

Brother Afrasiyab • Victim Siavash

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ VILLAIN ♦

SHAGHAD شغاد

The brother who betrayed Rostam

VILLAIN 7 OF 7 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why is betrayal by family the deepest wound?

THINK ABOUT IT

Half-brother Rostam • Conspired with the king of Kabul

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ CREATURE ♦

ZAHHAK'S SERPENTS ماران ضحاک

Tyranny that devours its own people

CREATURE 1 OF 6 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What do the serpents tell us about tyranny?

THINK ABOUT IT

Grew from Zahhak • Created by Ahriman's kiss

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ CREATURE ♦

SIMORGH سیمرغ

The wise bird of Mount Qaf, keeper of the ages

CREATURE 2 OF 6 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why is wisdom sometimes more useful than strength?

THINK ABOUT IT

Raised Zal • Aided Rostam • Home Mount Qaf

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ CREATURE ♦

THE WHITE DIV دیو سپید

King of the demons of Mazandaran

CREATURE 3 OF 6 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why must the hardest trial come last?

THINK ABOUT IT

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

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ CREATURE ♦

AZHDAHA اژدها

The great dragon of Persian myth

CREATURE 4 OF 6 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What do dragons stand for in hero stories?

THINK ABOUT IT

Guards treasure and sacred places • Faced by Rostam

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ CREATURE ♦

AKVAN DIV اکوان دیو

The demon who does the opposite

CREATURE 5 OF 6 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

How did Rostam turn knowledge into survival?

THINK ABOUT IT

Tricked by Rostam

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ CREATURE ♦

HOMA BIRD هما

The bird whose shadow crowns kings

CREATURE 6 OF 6 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why did people want kingship to come from the sky?

THINK ABOUT IT

Grants royal fortune • Never lands on earth

CONNECTED TO

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.

Atlas of Kings

DECK TWO • THE PLACES OF THE EPIC



♦ PLACE ♦

IRAN ایران

The homeland the heroes defend

PLACE 1 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why is home worth defending?

THINK ABOUT IT

Rostam • the kings of Iran • the pahlavans

CONNECTED TO

The heartland of the Shahnameh, blessed with the divine Farn, 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.



♦ PLACE ♦

MOUNT DAMAVAND دماوند

The mountain that imprisons Zabbak

PLACE 2 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why chain evil away instead of destroying it?

THINK ABOUT IT

Fereydun • Zabbak

CONNECTED TO

The great volcanic peak at the heart of Persian mythology, where Fereydun chained the tyrant Zabbak 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.



♦ PLACE ♦

ALBORZ MOUNTAINS البرز

Where the human world meets the mythic

PLACE 3 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why do myths so often live in mountains?

THINK ABOUT IT

Zal • Simorgh • Zabbak

CONNECTED TO

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



♦ PLACE ♦

KABUL کابل

Home of Rudابه, root of Rostam

PLACE 4 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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

THINK ABOUT IT

Rudابه • Zal • Rostam

CONNECTED TO

The home of Rudابه, 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.



♦ PLACE ♦

ZABULISTAN & SISTAN زابلستان و سیستان

Homeland of Rostam's dynasty

PLACE 5 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

How does a place shape a hero?

THINK ABOUT IT

Sam • Zal • Rostam

CONNECTED TO

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.



♦ PLACE ♦

MAZANDARAN مازندران

The demon-baunted kingdom

PLACE 6 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why does its geography matter to the story?

THINK ABOUT IT

Kay Kavus • Rostam • the White Div

CONNECTED TO

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.



◆ PLACE ◆

SAMANGAN سمنگان

Where a love story planted a tragedy

PLACE 7 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

How can joy and tragedy share one beginning?

THINK ABOUT IT

Rostam • Tahmineh • Sohrab

CONNECTED TO

The city where Rostam, having lost Raksh 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.



◆ PLACE ◆

HAMAVARAN هاماوران

The kingdom of the false surrender

PLACE 8 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why is betrayal under a flag of peace so serious?

THINK ABOUT IT

Kay Kavus • Sudabeh • Rostam

CONNECTED TO

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.



◆ PLACE ◆

TURAN توران

Iran's great rival across the river

PLACE 9 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Are the people of Iran and Turan really so different?

THINK ABOUT IT

Afrasiyab • Slavash • Kay Khosrow

CONNECTED TO

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 Slavash, unfold here.



◆ PLACE ◆

OXUS / JEYHUN جیحون

The river border of two worlds

PLACE 10 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

Why do rivers make such powerful borders?

THINK ABOUT IT

Iran • Turan • Slavash

CONNECTED TO

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



◆ PLACE ◆

GANG DEZH گنگ دژ

The paradise built by a doomed prince

PLACE 11 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What might have been if Slavash had lived?

THINK ABOUT IT

Slavash • Kay Khosrow

CONNECTED TO

The beautiful fortress-city built by the exiled Slavash 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.



◆ PLACE ◆

BALKH بلخ

The mother of cities

PLACE 12 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

How do faith and power shape one city?

THINK ABOUT IT

Goshasp • Zoroaster • Esfandiyar

CONNECTED TO

One of the most ancient cities of the Persian world, the seat of King Goshasp 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.



✦ PLACE ✦

PERSEPOLIS تخت جمشید

Ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire

PLACE 13 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What do ruins teach us that whole buildings cannot?

THINK ABOUT IT

Darius the Great • the Persian Empire

CONNECTED TO

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.



✦ PLACE ✦

RUM (ROME) روم

The western edge of the known world

PLACE 14 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

How did the Persians see their neighbors?

THINK ABOUT IT

diplomacy and war • compare with Chin

CONNECTED TO

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.



✦ PLACE ✦

CHIN (CHINA) چین

The eastern edge of the known world

PLACE 15 OF 15 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

What made the ancient world feel connected?

THINK ABOUT IT

the Silk Road • compare with Rum

CONNECTED TO

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.

Hall of Persian Words

DECK THREE • 55 WORDS

پهلوان

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

PAHLAVAN

PAH · LA · VAAN

WORD 1 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.

فر

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

FARR

FARR

WORD 2 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

DIVINE ROYAL GLORY

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

شاهنامه

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

SHAHNAMEH

Shah · NAA · meh

WORD 3 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

THE BOOK OF KINGS

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

درفش

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

DERAFSH

De · RAFSH

WORD 4 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.

هفتخان

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

HAFT KHAN

Haft · KHAAN

WORD 5 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

THE SEVEN TRIALS

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

دادگر

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

DADGAR

daad · GAR

WORD 6 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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 ✦

GORZ

GORZ

WORD 7 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

A WAR MACE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

TAKHT

TAKHT

WORD 8 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

A ROYAL THRONE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

TAJ

TAAJ

WORD 9 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

ATASH

AA · tash

WORD 10 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold

FIRE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

KHORSHID

Khor · SHEED

WORD 11 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold

THE SUN

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

MAH

MAAH

WORD 12 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold

THE MOON

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

دریا

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

DARYA

da · RYAA

WORD 13 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

THE SEA, A GREAT RIVER

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

KUH

KOOH

WORD 14 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

A MOUNTAIN

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

جنگ

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

JANG

JANG

WORD 15 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

WAR, BATTLE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

SOLH

SOLH

WORD 16 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

PEACE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

ADL

ADL

WORD 17 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

JUSTICE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

DOOSTI

doos · TEE

WORD 18 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

FRIENDSHIP, LOYALTY

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

DOSHMAN

dosh · MAN

WORD 19 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold

AN ENEMY, A FOE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

PIROOZI

pee · ROO · zee

WORD 20 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold

VICTORY

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

SHEKAST

she · KAST

WORD 21 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold

DEFEAT

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

نوروز

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

NOWRUZ

No · ROOZ

WORD 22 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

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!

fold

آرمان

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

ARMAN

Aar · MAAN

WORD 23 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

A NOBLE IDEAL

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

fold

شجاعت

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

SHOJAAT

sho · JAA · at

WORD 24 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

BRAVERY, VALOR

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

fold



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

KHERAD

khe · RAD

WORD 25 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

WISDOM, REASON

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

RASTI

raas · TEE

WORD 26 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

TRUTHFULNESS

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

AZADI

Aa · ZAA · dee

WORD 27 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

FREEDOM

What the heroes of the Shahnamah ultimately fight for: liberation from tyrants like Zahhak is the epic's great theme.

افتخار

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

EFTEKHAR

Ef · te · KHAAR

WORD 28 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

PRIDE, HONOR

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

دل

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

DEL

DEL

WORD 29 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

THE HEART

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

جان

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

JAN

JAAN

WORD 30 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

THE SOUL, LIFE-FORCE

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

آب

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

AB

AAB

WORD 31 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

WATER

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

باد

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

BAD

BAAD

WORD 32 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

WIND

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

زمین

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

ZAMIN

Za · MEEN

WORD 33 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

THE EARTH, THE LAND

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

آسمان

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

ASEMAN

Aas · MAAN

WORD 34 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

THE SKY, THE HEAVENS

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

ستاره

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

SETAREH

Se · TAA · reh

WORD 35 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

A STAR

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

شب

✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

SHAB

SHAB

WORD 36 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

NIGHT

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

ROOZ

ROOZ

WORD 37 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

DAY

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

GANJ

GANJ

WORD 38 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

TREASURE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

DEZH

DEZH

WORD 39 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

A FORTRESS

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

LASHKAR

LASH · kar

WORD 40 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold · ·

AN ARMY

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

ZEREH

Zeh · REH

WORD 41 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold · ·

ARMOR

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

KAMAN

Ka · MAAN

WORD 42 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold · ·

A BOW

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

TIR

TEER

WORD 43 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

AN ARROW

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

ASB

ASB

WORD 44 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

A HORSE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

PAR

PAR

WORD 45 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

A FEATHER

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

AHANGAR

Aa · han · GAR

WORD 46 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold

A BLACKSMITH

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

PADSHAH

Paa · de · SHAAH

WORD 47 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold

A KING, A GREAT RULER

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

VAZIR

Va · ZEER

WORD 48 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

· · ∞ fold

A ROYAL ADVISOR

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

SHAER

shaa · ER

WORD 49 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

A POET

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

DANESH

daa · NESH

WORD 50 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

KNOWLEDGE, LEARNING

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

OMID

o · MEED

WORD 51 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

HOPE

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

NAM

NAAM

WORD 52 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

NAME, REPUTATION

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



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

PEYMAN

pay · MAAN

WORD 53 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

BAZM

BAZM

WORD 54 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.



✦ PERSIAN WORD ✦

RAZM

RAZM

WORD 55 OF 55 EPIC OF KINGS

⌕ fold

BATTLE, COMBAT

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

Wonders of Persia

DECK FOUR • TRIVIA FROM 3,000 YEARS

?

♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 1 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES EPIC OF KINGS

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.

fold

?

♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 2 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES 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!

fold

?

♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 3 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES EPIC OF KINGS

ZORASTRIANISM

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.

fold



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 4 OF 18 • GOLDEN AGE EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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!

AL-KHWARIZMI



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 5 OF 18 • GOLDEN AGE EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.

BIRUNI



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 6 OF 18 • GOLDEN AGE EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.

AVICENNA



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 7 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES EPIC OF KINGS

fold

THE YAKHCHAL

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 ♦

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

WONDER 8 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 9 OF 18 • GOLDEN AGE EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 10 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES 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.

fold



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 11 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES EPIC OF KINGS

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.

fold



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 12 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES EPIC OF KINGS

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.

fold



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 13 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES EPIC OF KINGS

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.

fold



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 14 OF 18 • AGE OF POETS EPIC OF KINGS

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.

fold



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 15 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES EPIC OF KINGS

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.

fold



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

Which beloved poet's name means "memorizer," a title for one who has memorized the entire Quran?

WONDER 16 OF 18 • AGE OF POETS EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.

HAFEZ



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

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

WONDER 17 OF 18 • AGE OF EMPIRES EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.

نوروز NOWRUZ



♦ WONDERS OF PERSIA ♦

Which poem is credited with saving the Persian language itself?

WONDER 18 OF 18 • GOLDEN AGE EPIC OF KINGS

fold

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.

شاهنامه THE SHAHNAMEH