

# Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings (Penguin Classics)

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The definitive translation by Dick Davis of the great national epic of Iran-now newly revised and expanded to be the most complete English-language edition

A Penguin Classic

Dick Davis-"our pre-eminent translator from the Persian" (The Washington Post)-has revised and expanded his acclaimed translation of Ferdowsi's masterpiece, adding more than 100 pages of newly translated text. Davis's elegant combination of prose and verse allows the poetry of the Shahnameh to sing its own tales directly, interspersed sparingly with clearly marked explanations to ease along modern readers.

Originally composed for the Samanid princes of Khorasan in the tenth century, the Shahnameh is among the greatest works of world literature. This prodigious narrative tells the story of pre-Islamic Persia, from the mythical creation of the world and the dawn of Persian civilization through the seventh-century Arab conquest. The stories of the Shahnameh are deeply embedded in Persian culture and beyond, as attested by their appearance in such works as *The Kite Runner* and the love poems of Rumi and Hafez.

For more than sixty-five years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,500 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Abolqasem Ferdowsi was born in Khorasan in a village near Tus in 940. His great epic, *Shahnameh*, was originally composed for the Samanid princes of Khorasan. Ferdowsi died around 1020 in poverty.

Dick Davis (translator) is professor emeritus of Persian at Ohio State University and a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. His translations from Persian include *Faces of Love: Hafez and the Poets of Shiraz* and *Vis and Ramin*.

Azar Nafisi (foreword) is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *Things I've Been Silent About*, and *The Republic of Imagination*. She lives in Washington, D.C. Dick Davis [is] our pre-eminent translator from the Persian... Thanks to Davis's magnificent translation, Ferdowsi and the *Shahnameh* live again in English -- Michael Dirda \* *Washington Post* \* Accessible... A poet himself, Davis brings to his translation a nuanced awareness of Ferdowsi's subtle rhythms and cadences. His "*Shahnameh*" is rendered in an exquisite blend of poetry and prose, with none of the antiquated flourishes that so often mar translations of epic poetry -- Reza Aslan (author of *Zealot*) \* *New York Times Books Review* \* Davis's wonderful translation will show Western readers why Ferdowsi's masterpiece is one of the most revered and most beloved classics in the Persian world. -- Khaled Hosseini

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