

Darius Fights Alexander Again

BACK IN PERSIA, HIS PALACE EMPTY OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS, THE FUGITIVE KING DARIUS HOPES FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION. - [speaking native language] narrator: HE OFFERS TO RANSOM HIS FAMILY WITH A PEACE TREATY, GOLD, THE HAND OF HIS DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE, AND ALL THE LANDS WEST OF THE EUPHRATES RIVER. - [speaking native language] narrator: HIS OFFER IS GENEROUS. THE GREEKS CAN RETURN HOME CONQUERING HEROES WITH AN EMPIRE STRETCHING FROM THE BALKANS TO LIBYA AND AS FAR EAST AS THE EUPHRATES. ONE OF ALEXANDER'S MOST EXPERIENCED GENERALS, PARMENION, IS DELIGHTED BY THE TERMS. "IF I WAS ALEXANDER, HE URGES, "I WOULD ACCEPT THE TRUCE AND END THE WAR WITHOUT FURTHER RISK. "SO WOULD I, ALEXANDER SCOFFS, "IF I WAS PARMENION. MANY OF HIS MEN BEGIN TO WONDER IF THEIR LEADER HAS FINALLY GONE TOO FAR. HE'S GAMBLING ALL THEY WON AGAINST THE WEIGHT OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE. WHEN THE ARMIES MEET, THE BATTLE WILL BE FOUGHT BY NEARLY 400,000 MEN, BUT IT WILL HINGE ON THE COURAGE OF ONLY ONE. ALEXANDER HAS REJECTED DARIUS' OFFER OF RANSOM, SETTING THE TWO ADVERSARIES ON A COLLISION COURSE. THE PERSIAN KING HAS LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO PREPARE FOR A DECISIVE CONFRONTATION. SUMMONING ALL HIS TROOPS FROM AS FAR AWAY AS INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN, HE FORMS ONE VAST IMPERIAL ARMY OF 300,000 MEN. THE TWO ARMIES CONVERGE AT A PLACE CALLED GAUGAMELA. [horse neighs] ON THE 20TH OF SEPTEMBER, 331 B.C., ALEXANDER'S FORCES, SOME 50,000 STRONG, MARCH ON THE FULL MIGHT OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE. AFTER YEARS OF WAITING, THESE TWO BITTER RIVALS ARE FINALLY POISED FOR THE ULTIMATE SHOWDOWN. ALEXANDER SIGNALS HIS TROOPS TO TURN AND CHARGE STRAIGHT AT DARIUS. [men screaming] REALIZING THAT HE IS IN GRAVE DANGER, DARIUS ONCE AGAIN LOSES HIS NERVE. [men screaming] [horse neighs] HE TURNS AND RUNS. [crowd cheering] ABANDONED BY THEIR KING, THE PERSIANS CAN FIND NO REASON TO CONTINUE FIGHTING. THE VICTORY BELONGS TO ALEXANDER.
