1. **Keep this document opened while answering the multiple choice and reading comprehension questions.**

**PERSEPOLIS GOES UP IN FLAMES**

Questions to ask before reading the story:

• Have you ever been to an art museum? Did it have any statues or stone engravings?

• Do you know anyone who has lost property or possessions due to a fire?

• If someone does something that harms you, should you seek revenge?

Alexander the Great had placed himself before the relief at Persepolis, the richest city in all Persia. He had just come through rooms in which beautiful tapestries covered the walls. Earlier he had seen, in one of the several palatial residences, caskets made from Lebanon cedar, their wooden sides engraved, and decorated with gold and silver. He had admired the high ceilings, supported by fluted columns that held aloft carvings of bulls and griffins.

Now he carefully studied the figures that had been chiseled into the outer stone walls. The dress on some of the figures represented the attire in lands that Alexander had already claimed for himself. The costumes on yet other carved figures represented people in lands that were still part of the vast Persian Empire. These were lands that Alexander planned to conquer. The people shown taking tributes to the Persian King were people whom Alexander intended to subjugate.

Alexander the Great was eager to move on to these distant lands, but his colleagues, who had downed large amounts of wine, stumbled around in a drunken stupor. Their inebriated minds stirred up within them a desire for revenge. They wanted to make the Persians pay for the damage a former Persian king, Xerxes, had done after invading Athens, more than 150 years earlier. Goaded by these drunken men and beguiled by members of his harem, Alexander the

Great ordered the burning of Persepolis.

Men and women, holding aloft flaming torches, raced up and down the terraces of Persepolis. Flames ignited the wooden beams of the palaces once built by Xerxes. Looters fought off the heat of the inferno in order to drag out gold vessels, and to tear silver rings from heavy draperies.

When the fires had died out, all that remained were the tall stone columns and the exquisite stone carvings on the outer walls. Alexander the Great had left, for discovery by future visitors, the Persian soldiers who were untouched by the leaping flames. These “Immortals” still march today in precise formation across the chiseled stone remains of Persepolis.

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**Glossary**

**Beguiled-** tricked

**Chiseled-** cut and shaped into wood or stone

**Exquisite-** having special beauty

**Fluted-** having ornamental grooves

**Goaded-** stimulated to activity

**Griffin-** a mythological creature with the head of an eagle and wings on a lion’s body.

**Inferno-** a place resembling hell; somewhere intensely hot, a raging fire

**Relief-** a method of carving or molding in which the design projects from the surface.