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

**PERSIAN WARRIORS DEFEATED**

Questions to ask before reading the story:

• What is a counter offensive move? How is it different from a defensive move?

• What is the meaning of the statement “The surest defense is a strong offense”?

• What does it mean to “snatch victory from the jaws of defeat”?

Alexander the Great stood with his army on the western shore of the Tigris River. He and his men had marched north from Tyre, crossing acres and acres of blackened land. Darius III had had his “Immortals” burn to the ground the long wheat grass that had been growing there. He had hoped to slow the advance of Alexander and his mighty fighting force.

Darius’ strategy had done little to delay the progress of the Greek forces. They prepared now to ford the Tigris, and to continue onward toward the village of Mosul. They knew that Darius III and the Persian warriors were camped nearby on the plain of Gaugamela. They remained unaware of Darius’ newest tactic.

When Alexander and his men reached the plain of Gaugamela, they found that the ground had been made level. The Persian chariots stood in formation, ready to attack across that flat surface. Darius expected his scythed chariots to propel themselves forcefully into the Greek forces, with their curved blades ripping at the flesh of both horses and men.

The chariots began their rapid drive toward the army of Alexander the Great. The Greek general, having made a quick assessment of the situation, ordered the ranks of the Greek fighters to split apart. This maneuver left the Persians moving forward, without having anyone to mow down. Because they traveled at great speed, the Persians could not get turned around. Caught between enemy lines, many Persian chariot drivers fell victim to the spears and arrows of their Greek opponents.

Still, Darius was not ready to surrender. He spotted places where his men could outflank the Greeks, sneaking around behind the enemy ranks. Some enemy units met the fate that Darius had intended, that of being run over by the Persian chariots. None of this, however, seemed to faze Alexander the Great.

The Greek general ordered the Companions, the cavalry, to form a wedge. The point of the wedge charged directly at Darius. The Persian King fled, leading to a collapse of whatever resistance he had managed to muster. Alexander the Great again emerged as the victor.

Alexander’s first impulse was to direct his men on a chase after the fleeing Darius. He chose, instead, to go south to Babylon, where he allowed his men to have one month of rest. From there Alexander headed his army east, toward the treasures that lay in central Persia.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Glossary**

**Assessment-** act of estimating the worth or quality or likelihood of something

**Faze**- to disconcert, to fluster

**Ford-** to cross a body of water by wading, riding or driving through

**Formation-** a particular arrangement or order

**Impulse-** a sudden inclination to act, without thought for consequences

**Muster-** to cause to assemble; to summon

**Ranks-** lines of people or things