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"It was a refreshing, old-fashioned pleasure to read Julie Scott Meisami's verse translation of, and introduction and notes to, this twelfth-century Persian allegorical romance." --Orhan Pahmuk, in the Times Literary Supplement

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The romance of the Haft Paykar ("Seven Beauties") is one of the great works of Persian literature. Completed in 1197 by the poet Nizami of Ganja, it is an allegorical romance of great beauty and depth, and its central theme of self-knowledge as the path to human perfection is conveyed in rich and vivid imagery and complex symbolism. The Haft Paykar tells the story of the Sassanian ruler Prince Bahram V Gur and his progress towards wisdom, and is enlivened by many adventures and by the seven tales--love stories--told to the prince by his brides. This new English verse translation captures the beauty and sophistication of the original, and makes this masterpiece of twelfth-century Persia accessible to a wide audience.

Dr. Meisami discloses previously neglected stylistic qualities and ethical purposes in medieval Persian court poetry, and shows that court poets were also moral instructors who examined and celebrated the values they shared with their audiences. The book also takes into account the close relationship between Persian and Arabic court poetry. Originally published in 1987. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905.

Ah, I told myself, these houris must have a queen! And I was right, for there she came, looking as beautiful as the moon on a starry night.

Overview of Iranian and Persian manuscript painting, manuscript illumination, calligraphy and drawing, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century

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.

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