

# *The Shifting Sands* outline

Draft 2

## Act I (1257 A.D.)

### **Part 1**

Begins with black screen. Jamshad's music box is playing. Titlecard: Month, 1257. Azarshah, Persia.

Protagonist, Firuz, awakens at sunrise and puts on his uniform. Firuz can tell player descriptions of items in house. He goes into the kitchen and his wife, Laleh, gives him a buttered roll. She wishes him luck. He thanks her and says "King Mehrdad's summon mentioned a special assignment. If it includes leaving the city walls, I'll come back before leaving to wish you farewell." The children come into the kitchen and embrace Firuz. They wish him luck. He leaves and walks to the palace. The city is free to be explored.

Firuz reports to King Mehrdad, who briefs Firuz on his mission. He is to retrieve an engine prototype from an inventor in a town out west, then kill him. Firuz protests. Mehrdad insists. Firuz tells Mehrdad, "With all due respect, you are abusing your power by having me steal from a civilian and kill him without cause." Mehrdad erupts and threatens to kill Firuz unless he complies. Mehrdad questions Firuz's loyalty and ejects him from the throne room, then assigns Captain Dilshed to accompany him. Dilshed tells Firuz to meet him by front gates of city and exits throne room. Dilshed leaves palace.

Firuz speaks to his wife and children. Laleh tells Firuz not to try to be a hero; and to not try to save the world. Firuz says he is no hero; just a tool of King Mehrdad. He tells his children to behave. Meets Dilshed at the city gates. The party of two leaves.

### **Part 2**

Party passes through corridor into wider valley. As it widens they come to a cave, Cave 1, that leads to a shortcut tunnel. They stay the night inside, then continue on in the morning. When they exit they are about a hundred yards away from Town1. In the town they meet a traveler, Paris. They ask him where he's going. They tell him they're going to the same place and Firuz offers to travel with him for mutual protection from bandits. He agrees. In this town there is a restaurant attached to the caravanserai, a school (tutorial), and a Range which the player can use to sharpen skills and level up. The party departs and continues toward the junction leading to their destination.

At Town2 a stranger sneaks up on Dilshed while he is restringing his bow. Firuz comes in and shouts "Look out!" Dilshed has just enough time to dodge the attack and disarms Stranger. He is about to kill Stranger but Firuz stops him, saying they don't want to start an incident, especially since they are outnumbered by the townsfolk. Dilshed asks Stranger why he attacked them. Stranger says they are not welcome here. He asks how his townspeople could ever forget what Mehrdad's army did to them. Dilshed starts bickering. Paris suggests they move on, saying that what happened, happened; all he knows is that they're not wanted. Firuz agrees. The party leaves the town.

The party reaches a larger east-west road. There is no nearby town to the east, so the party cannot go far, and instead travels west. Near the intersection to the west is Town3. When party checks in for a bed, clerk says he recognizes Firuz's and Dilshed's uniforms. Firuz says that the people in the last town had an unfriendly attitude. As the other two head up to the room, Clerk relates to Firuz a story of a vicious campaign against that town in which Mehrdad's army stole everything of value and killed anyone who resisted. When the Mongols came to collect their annual tribute, the townspeople had nothing to give. "We lost most of our men that day," he recalls.

Firuz apologizes and says he was unaware of that campaign, though it doesn't surprise him. Firuz says he is starting to question his own stake in this. In the morning party continues west.

At an intersection heading SW, Paris leaves party. Party comes to another cave, Cave 2, by the side of the road. Inside there are two underground tunnels, from which the player chooses. One is long and winding but easy. The other holds much treasure but is difficult. There are tremors and the party must race to the exit of the cave as the ceiling collapses. The party continues west and reaches a small spring. After they rest they continue northwest to the inventor's town.

When the party rests next (be it in a town or tent) Firuz asks Dilshed if he ever feels doubt about his duty. Dilshed says that he is loyal to the king, and that Mehrdad was right to mistrust Firuz. Firuz says that he, too, is loyal to the king, but from what he has heard on the mission, maybe their actions are in the wrong. Dilshed asks if Firuz intends to question Mehrdad's authority. Hero begins to rebut, but gives up. Firuz thinks to himself that through his years as commander, his doubt has only grown. He asks himself when did it start? He falls asleep. Fade out.

Flashback, c. 1222. Fade in. Current King, Aryaburzin, and Queen Shahnava of Azarshah are thrilled with the arrival of their firstborn. They go to the Temple of Fire to seek the Zoroastrian Head Priest's blessing. Priest reads prophecy that dictates firstborn must be raised by another couple, unaware of his true identity. Aryaburzin asks if Firstborn can be shown his lineage upon age of majority. Priest says prophecy shall reveal itself more with time.

The party reaches the inventor Jamshad's town (Town4). The ground is covered with grass throughout the entire town. Firuz sees many inventions which improve everyone's quality of life. Dilshed says to him at one point not to forget what they were sent here to do, and that the inventor's house is in the northwest corner. When they reach his house Dilshed says he'll wait outside and keep watch while Firuz goes in. Firuz finds Jamshad's workshop and enters. Jamshad asks Firuz how he may be of assistance. Firuz hesitates, then says he can't do it. Firuz states his mission and suggests Jamshad escape. Dilshed runs in and says someone is coming. He sees Jamshad still alive and calls Firuz a traitor. Firuz says he would rather be a traitor than a murderer. Dilshed throws a knife at Jamshad and says to Firuz that he doesn't have to be, adding that Firuz will be placed under arrest on return to Azarshah. Dilshed grabs plans for engine and leaves. Firuz tells Jamshad he's sorry, then leaves. A teenage boy runs in to the room and cries out for Jamshad. Jamshad says to the boy, his nephew, to always remember what he was taught. A townsman sees the plans being stolen and sounds the alarm. The party must escape the town, fighting every step of the way.

### **Part 3**

Cuts to throne room, Azarshah. Mehrdad tells Firuz he is disappointed at Firuz's treason. He tells Dilshed to give him the plans, then tells Firuz he has served his purpose well. Mehrdad tells Dilshed to escort Firuz to the dungeon. Firuz protests, takes Dilshed's sword, and fights the guards (auto. mode). Mehrdad grabs a sword and fights Firuz (The background scrolls during the fight until the two are down in the dungeon.) Mehrdad backs Firuz up against the wall. He whispers "You know, don't you?" Firuz asks "What?" Mehrdad says "You've known all along. You've been waiting to take my place." Firuz says "I never—!" Mehrdad says "The line ends here. I shall choose an heir as I see fit." Moves to kill Firuz but Firuz half-blocks and is knocked unconscious. A soldier runs in and asks the Mehrdad if he's all right. Mehrdad answers "Yes, of course, you idiot. Are the men prepared to move out?" The soldier answers "Yes, your majesty!" Mehrdad says "Then let's move. Tell the commander to place the city on lock-down. But first, I need to make a stop." Fade out.

Firuz awakens later to orders being shouted by distant guard. (Azarshah is planned to be fortified and the citizens are now slaves, fortifying the city under whip.) Gets up and frees his friend, Lieutenant Commander Dara, on the way out. They help each other escape. On the way some guards' conversations can be heard. One guard mentions to another that the king is planning to fortify the city; if the Mongols ever invade, they'll be

ready. Party comes to point of escape. Firuz wishes to free his family but Dara warns that it's too dangerous. Dara needs Firuz and there's no sense in being captured. Firuz agrees to leave with Dara. Firuz looks back and says "I'll return for you," then climbs out of Azarshah.

## Act II (1257, 1258 A.D.)

### Part 1

Firuz and Dara are resting in Cave 1. Firuz asks what their course of action should be. Dara says that since the Khwarezmian Shahdom fell, the only major resistance to the Mongolian Empire along the Silk Road is Baghdad in the Abbasid Caliphate. Firuz says that Mehrdad must be going there too in order to build an army against the Mongol Empire. Dara concurs and says that they are now racing against the king's army. Continue on toward east-west road. In Town3, Firuz asks someone if Mehrdad passed through. Townsman replies yes, and that one of Mehrdad's men said they were going to Tabriz. Firuz asks Dara "Why would he be going to the Ilkhanate's capital?" Dara says "I'm not sure. It's no secret the king hates the Mongols. He can't possibly be thinking about fighting them with his limited army." "If he's not going to Baghdad, that buys us a lot of time. What do you think we should do?" Dara suggests they go to Town4 to make amends and find a counter-technology to the engine for which the king stole the plans.

Flashback, c. 1230: King Aryaburzin and Queen Shahnavaz instruct prince Mehrdad to explore the city with his entourage. After he leaves Shahnavaz says to Aryaburzin she worries about his short temper. She asks "Do you think he may be possessed by druj?" Aryaburzin says "No, he is just a boy. With guidance and time, he'll learn to subdue his anger." Mehrdad is carried around city. If player tells carriage to park, Mehrdad can walk about with guards. During a conversation with a boy Mehrdad becomes angry and hits the boy. Climbs to top of city walls and guard tells Mehrdad about the isolation of Azarshah—this is why it is in Persia, but not under the rule of Khwarezmia. Player may explore Azarshah until sundown, then Mehrdad is brought inside and goes to bed.

Party meets teenager, Eskandar, in Oasis. Dara says "Good day. I see you are travelling lightly. May we share our provisions with you?" Eskandar responds "No, thanks. I'm almost back to my hometown." Firuz asks "Where is that? Maybe we can travel together." Eskandar says "I don't need anyone's help." Dara says "I see. It's just that we were going to Town4 to make amends for Jamshad's death." Eskandar asks "What?" Firuz says "Well, I was sent to kill Jamshad. I feel deeply sorry about what my king, Mehrdad, has ordered." Dara adds "The two of us are en route to Town4 to see if we can make amends and to find a counter to the technology king Mehrdad stole." Eskandar says "On second thought, I think I will go with you." Dara says "Very well. It's too dark to set out now, however, so we'll have to make camp for the night." Asks Firuz to help him with the tent. When they walk off screen, Eskandar thinks 'So he's the one who killed uncle.'

During the night Eskandar is standing outside by the dying campfire. Firuz comes out and speaks to Eskandar, saying he's sorry he couldn't stop it, and that we must use what life gives us to better the future. Firuz wishes Eskandar good night and returns to his tent. Eskandar fumes to himself about Firuz's audacity to talk to him after Jamshad's murder. In the morning the party sets out.

A messenger reaches the king and informs him that Firuz escaped. Mehrdad asks who was in charge of security. The security chief steps forward and Mehrdad kills him. Mehrdad orders men to prepare to disembark, saying to Dilshed "We don't want to miss our appointment with the Mongols, do we?"

Party is walking along. Firuz looks up and says "It's midday already? We'll fall behind Mehrdad if we don't find transportation." Dara agrees, saying "Agreed. Even with our lead we need to move with greater alacrity. There are no horse stables around here, but I was told we can find camels in a town to the north. I hope they accept payment in trade" They go to the town to the north, Town5.

Camel herder does not accept barter. He agrees to sell them a harness and saddle for what little they have, and tells them where to find a wild camel. Party goes on fetch quest to find camel. When they come close to camel a battle begins. Marauders are trying to rob an old man. Party saves man who introduces himself as a scholar, Ahmad Abd-al-Latif. He is returning to Baghdad from a research journey. He agrees to join party and share camel with Eskandar. On way back to Town5 Paris rejoins party, saying he has some business in Baghdad with a trader.

When party moves through the narrow valley to reach Town4, the shifting sands obstruct their path. They must ride around the mountains. Several sidequests become available on the way. Party fills in Ahmad on their story and mission during a somewhat long stretch of road. When the party rests next they are ambushed by Mehrdad. Party fights Mehrdad's guards while Mehrdad battles Firuz. "Did you think you would get away with escaping? Are you happy about abandoning your family?" Firuz says "I did what I had to. Once I stop you I'll free them." Mehrdad laughs. "You don't know? Oh, how delightful! Now I can have the satisfaction of telling you!" Firuz asks "Telling me what?" Mehrdad says "I killed them! I killed your family to punish your treachery!" Firuz is shocked and lets down his guard. Mehrdad moves to kill him but Dara jumps in and blocks his blade. Dara says "Your men have been vanquished, your majesty. I suggest you leave now." Mehrdad looks around to see his fallen men and says "You haven't seen the last of me!" Dara raises his sword. Mehrdad jumps away and runs to his horse. Ahmad asks "Was that your king?" Dara says "Yes." Ahmad says "I'm terribly sorry. And even more so about your family, Firuz. It must be hard to lose the ones you love." Eskandar mutters "Yes, it is." Ahmad says "I am sorry for your loss too, Eskandar. Perhaps something good will come of all this. Now what do you say we go back to bed? There are a few hours left until dawn." The others go back to their tents. Eskandar thinks 'Yeah, something good will come out of this: Firuz's death. Tomorrow night.'

The next night in the camp Eskandar is looking at his knife. Paris comes out and says "Are you all right?" Eskandar says "Yeah. I just—" "Look determined." Eskandar nods. "He killed my uncle, Paris. Am I supposed to forget that?" Paris says "Who, Firuz? He was acting under orders of Mehrdad. You saw how ruthless that man was." Eskandar says "So? He could have disobeyed. But he went through with it. I want him to feel the same thing my uncle felt." Paris says "His own family was killed. Surely you agree th—" Eskandar interrupts "I don't care! I DON'T... care. I want to bring justice to Firuz." "Paris says "So you'd kill a man, to avenge a dead man. You know what you'll have then? Two dead men. What good is that?" Eskandar says "I can't...! I don't know what to do! I'll just go ahead to Town4 and think it over, all right?" Eskandar walks away. Camera cuts away from campsite as Eskandar walks further away. Paris says "Wait!" and brings Eskandar a camel. "You'll need this." Eskandar asks "Don't you need it?" Paris says "No, I'll get a replacement from a friend in a town nearby. Go on." Eskandar leaves. Paris leaves in another direction.

As the Sun is rising a troop of horsemen rides past the camp. Mehrdad yells "Only a few more miles! Find the rest of the inventor's plans then destroy the town!" Hero comes out of his tent. "That was Mehrdad!" Dara comes out. "How...? He must have had a battalion waiting nearby! Ahmad, Eskandar, wake up! We must leave at once!" Firuz asks "What are we going to do? We can't catch up on camels." Paris says from off-screen "You don't have to." Paris rides a horse on screen and is guiding four more. Dara asks "Where did you get those?" Paris responds "From an old friend who owes me a favor." Dara says "Come, we must leave at once. Where is Eskandar?" Paris says "He went ahead to Town4 last night." Firuz says "WHAT?! You let him go alone? Let's go, at once!" They leave with all deliberate speed.

When they reach Town4 they see the king's forces looting it. Fight unwinnable battle with Mehrdad. Eskandar joins party during fight. After Firuz falls to the ground Mehrdad says "You couldn't save Azarshah, so you abandoned it. Since you can't save Town4, will you abandon it too?" Paris says "Leave him alone!" Mehrdad says "Your name is Paris, isn't it? Paris is only one letter away from "pari." Is that what you are? A dainty, mischievous fairy?" Mehrdad laughs. "A little pari defends this escape artist! That is what Firuz is, isn't it?" Dilshed rides over and says "No doubt, your majesty. He fled Azarshah, and when he couldn't save Jamshad he fled this town as well." Mehrdad says "Such a coward doesn't deserve life." Mehrdad moves to kill Firuz but Mongol Commander Nergüi blocks his sword. She says "I have a report to make to Khülegü. Whatever

transpires here is my responsibility.” Mehrdad says “...Fine. I’ll just let him wallow in his cowardice.” Mehrdad and the others leave. Commander Nergüi says “Abandon this pursuit if you value your life. Next time I may not be able to save you.” She leaves.

Eskandar asks Firuz “What did he mean you couldn’t save my uncle?” Firuz says “Didn’t I tell you? I was sent to kill your uncle, but I couldn’t. Dilshed did it instead and branded me a traitor.” Eskandar says “So Dilshed killed my uncle? Then I must take my vengeance on him!” Paris says “This again? When will it end, Eskandar?” Eskandar says “I must do this!” Paris says “Why? Do you not see that vengeance will only consume you? You avenge your uncle, then Dilshed’s uncle avenges him, then your friend avenges you, and his friend avenges him. Enough! When one person is hurt we all feel the pain. Is the solution to increase it?” Firuz says “We should go. If Mehrdad came back here it means his plans were incomplete. I pray he didn’t find what he was looking for.” Dara says “Even if he did, we must continue to Baghdad. The more time their garrison has to prepare, the better.” Eskandar says “But shouldn’t we keep looking for a counter-technology?” Dara says “There’s nothing here! Let the adults make the decisions! You could have been killed running away from the camp last night!” Eskandar says “I’m sorry!” Firuz says “Let’s head north to Kermanshah. We can recover our tent on the way.” Player gains control of Eskandar while others stand around. If Eskandar explores his house, he accidentally steps on a box. He picks it up and recognizes it as the music box Jamshad invented.

Flashback: a younger Eskandar walks into Jamshad’s workshop. Jamshad says “Aah, Eskandar, you’re just in time. Let me put on the finishing touches, and... there.” Jamshad cranks a dial and the music box starts playing. Eskandar says “That’s beautiful.” Jamshad says “Thank you. With time I hope to write an algorithm to allow improvisation.” Eskandar says “I wish I had one of these before, when I couldn’t sleep those nights.” Jamshad says “When your father died?” Eskandar nods. Jamshad says “Then I am glad I built this. To make another person’s life more beautiful is its own reward. Never forget that, Eskandar, for we are all branches of the same tree.”

Party leaves Town4 and sets out for Kermanshah. They retrieve their items from the campsite, after fighting off several marauders who are in the process of stealing them. When the party rests next, something reminds Firuz of his sons. He says “I need to be alone” and leaves the tent. After a moment Dara follows. Firuz says “I want to be alone.” Dara says “No one can be alone. You’re either with a person, or with your thoughts. Firuz, try as you might you cannot stand alone as the Rock of Gibraltar. Your friends are here to share the pain in your heart.” Firuz says “It’s not right for me to burden you.” Dara says “This morning you left your things behind and rode to Town4 for Eskandar’s safety. I think you are owed recompense. ...I know losing your family is hard. Knowing my friends are in slavery or are dead is difficult for me, but we shall grieve.” Firuz says “It’s not just that. Dara, when I thought about my family, I realized that I didn’t just abandon them. I abandoned everyone in my hometown to a prisoner’s life. And now I’m fighting against the Mehrdad of that very city-state. I’m a traitor.” Dara says “No. It is Mehrdad who abandoned his people. You are serving them.” Firuz says “How? By running away?” Dara says “There is nothing we could have done.” Firuz says “So you mean it’s better I live a coward’s life than die a hero’s death? ...Hero? Damn it all! Why do I have to be the hero, anyway? I never asked for this!” Dara says “None of us have, but we are a part nonetheless and must continue.” Firuz says “To what end? So I can run from another town when the situation is tough? We’re just fooling ourselves! There’s no way we can stop Mehrdad!” Dara says “That’s why we are on this journey! Just as any person stands only with the help of his friends, so too can a people only stand with support. We will support our allies in Baghdad, and they us.” Firuz says “Thank you, Dara.” Dara says “That’s what friends are for.”

Cut to interior of tent. Eskandar says “Dara and Firuz have been talking a long time. I hope he’s all right.” Ahmad says “I don’t believe he is, and he won’t be for some time. He had the hope of liberating his family and returning to them, but this morning Mehrdad crushed that hope.” Paris says “What about you, Eskandar? You lost your uncle a month ago. Have you lost any other family today?” Eskandar says “No. My mother died giving birth to me, and my father died a few years ago fighting the Mongols.” Paris says “So your uncle was all you had? I’m sorry, Eskandar. No wonder you were completely shaken by it.” Eskandar says “Jamshad was my father, my teacher, and my guide. Without him I feel lost.” Ahmad says “Well, I’ll give you two directions, son.

North to Kermanshah, then west to Baghdad. Marvelous city.” Firuz and Dara come back inside the tent. Eskandar says “Are you better?” Firuz says “I will be. Dara taught me a lesson about self-doubt.” Eskandar says “Listen, Firuz, I’m sorry that I didn’t have the facts straight before deciding to take out my vengeance on you.” Firuz says “I’ve already forgotten. Let’s rest. We’ll need it.” Camera cuts to outside of tent illuminated from inside, then light going out.”

Party travels to Kermanshah, taking on two sidequests at the player’s discretion. Shifting sands block the path. Paris says “Let’s go into that cave, there. A passageway leads to the other side.” They go in to Cave 3 and drop off a rock face that can’t be climbed up. They come to an underground river that’s swelling. Seven refugees are standing on the bank, and a square raft is tethered to the ground. Puzzle #1. One of the refugees says “Will you help us? We can’t get across the river and it’s rising!” Paris says “The river isn’t supposed to swell like this for another month. Well, that piece of junk isn’t going to help much.” Refugee says “Every time we try to cross, it tips over.” Ahmad says “It seems that all you need is to distribute your weight evenly.” The camera switches to overhead. Ahmad continues “Since there are twelve of us, each row, column, and diagonal should have two persons on it.” Player takes control of each person, one at a time, and positions him on the raft, then chooses to move on to the next person. When all twelve are on, the tether is cut and the raft is swept downstream and to the other side of the river. The refugees thank the party and they all depart the cave. The party comes out on the other side and Paris says “That town to the north will have new horses for us.” They walk, get new horses, and travel the rest of the way to Kermanshah.

Just before party enters Kermanshah they are met by a boss, one of Mehrdad’s elite operatives. Boss battle, then enter city. Thick winter clothes are available for purchase. In the library there is a reading of an original story by a poet, called “The Rescue of Gemeg.”.

After coming out of the reading, civilians side by the side of the road. A single Mongol walks through the street and kills two residents. He asks one “Are you loyal to the Mongols?” then kills him. Mongol says “Of course you are.” He turns to another civilian and asks “Why do you not strike me? I am alone.” Civilian says “Be... Because if you are harmed the Mongol army will destroy this city.” Mongol says “You would not harm me?” and walks over to child and pulls him away from his mother. Mother says “No. No!” Mongol says “Not even if I slay this boy?” Mother says “Please, let him go! I beg of you!” Mongol says “Do not ever forget your allegiance to the Mongolian Empire, and no harm shall come to your PRECIOUS little boy.” Mongol releases the boy who runs back to his mother, crying “Mama!” Party rests for the night.

When party prepares to leave city, Mongol army comes into Kermanshah with Mehrdad’s forces. Ahmad sees army standing in streets. He warns party that they must escape through the back of the caravanserai. As they are leaving a mini-boss blocks their way. He must be defeated in a short amount of time. Half of the screen shows a cutscene of the soldiers dispersing and taking quarter in buildings (e.g. civilians’ houses). When boss 2 is defeated the party runs outside as the other cutscene continues playing. The party rides out of Kermanshah. (If party is detected, there will be more hard encounters on the way to Baghdad.)

## **Part 2**

The party is navigating the Silk Road through a snowy pass in the Zagros Mountains. They veer off the path at one point to get to a cave that will shelter them. On way to rest site in cave, party must beat time and the elements by moving along a path when the frosty wind stops, then ducking into the next alcove when it starts again, then repeating the process until the cave is reached (before they get hypothermia. The more time is spent, the colder it gets and the faster the temperature drops.) Each time they duck into an alcove, another sentence is spoken by a party member: Eskandar says “I saw Mehrdad’s men going into the same buildings as the Mongols. How have they become this close?” Firuz says “I don’t know. It still doesn’t make any sense. Mehrdad hates the Mongols. Why would he want to form an alliance with them?” Ahmad says “Especially since Azarshah is being fortified by its citizen-prisoners. Wouldn’t that mean that the king is expecting them to attack?” Firuz says “Knowing Mehrdad, he’s probably planning to double cross Khan.” Dara asks “What does he have to gain, and

what makes him think he won't lose anything? Professor, do the Mongols have a history of forming alliances?" Ahmad says "Not lately. Genghis Khan wished to become allies with the Khwarezmian Shahdom and sent peaceful diplomats which Sultan Muhammad II killed." Eskandar asks "What did Khan do after that?" Ahmad responds "Have you ever met anyone from Urgench?" Eskandar says "No." Ahmad says "There's a reason for that." Party has now reached cave. They walk in and start a fire as Ahmad says "From that day no one has been spared Khan's wrath. Only those who surrender live to tell the tale." Party goes into tent and rests.

Flashback, c. 1231: A faction of the former Khwarezmian Shahdom lays siege to Azarshah. The temple is destroyed and the priests killed. The palace is overtaken. Aryaburzin and Mehrdad are captured and warlord Fereydoun instructs his goons to "Emasculate the king and his prince. Let's see the people's morale after that!" The goons carry them away. A messenger comes to the leader and says "Sir! An army approaches! It's the Mongols." Fereydoun says "They've found us... Men! Barricade the city doorway! Do not let th—" Fereydoun is shot with a crossbow and falls off his horse. Mongols swarm into Azarshah and kill all of the invaders. Mongol Colonel says "Another threat neutralized. I'll have the men prepare to leave." Aide says "Ögedei, is there anything to be had from this city, since we have pursued the rebels all this way?" Ögedei says "It is too isolated to serve any tactical purpose. And yet... Bring out the leader of this place!" Aryaburzin is brought out and Khan says "We have spared your city from the invasion of warlord Fereydoun. As payment you must submit an annual tribute to the Mongol Empire. Otherwise you may rule yourselves independently. I shall send someone to discuss the terms tomorrow. Ride out!" The Mongols leave and Mehrdad from the shadows thinks 'How dare they prey on father when he is weak? I will make the Mongols pay for this humiliation.'

In the morning an avalanche covers the exit of the cave. Eskandar says "We're trapped! It'll take all day to dig out!" Paris says "We won't have to. Do you feel that breeze? This cave leads out of the mountain. Let's go." They travel deeper into the mountain and walk through a dungeon level. There is a boss at the end. When they exit they are in the Iraqi desert and there is a town, Town7, at the foothills nearby. The Silk Road runs past it. When party goes into restaurant, cutscene plays. Party is sitting around rug while food is brought out. Waiter sets dish in front of Eskandar, who asks "What's this?" Waiter says "Falafel. It's a traditional Mediterranean dish." Eskandar says "Er..." Waiter says "You told me to surprise you." Waiter walks back to kitchen. Eskandar says "Yeah, but... [sniffs]" Paris says "It's good. It's a chickpea patty." Eskandar says "For the main course? Man, Iraq is weird." Firuz asks "How much longer is it to Baghdad?" Ahmad says "About two days. I have stopped at this town before." Dara says "Mehrdad has not yet passed through here. They may have been blocked by the mountain snow." Ahmad says "Let us pray that it will not melt." Paris says "In the meantime, let's continue west. It's a straight shot of sand and pasture all the way there." Player regains control.

That night when they prepare for bed Firuz looks out the window and sees a lot of lights on the Zagros slopes. He asks "Look at those lights on the mountains." Dara looks and says "The Mongols. And Mehrdad. We have precious little time. We must leave as soon as the Sun rises." The others lie in their beds. Dara says "May Allah bless our horses' legs. Only he knows what gives the Mongols drive to side with Mehrdad." and climbs in bed also.

Speech appears over black screen. "So you see, Khan, together we can make the Mongol Empire the uncontested ruler of Earth." Black screen fades in to scene inside Khan's tent. Mehrdad continues. "All I want is Baghdad." Khülegü asks "Why should I give you such an incredibly important city? The crossroads between three continents?" Mehrdad says "Because I can fill your bank with secret treasure and your armory with super-weapons. Baghdad is hiding a mountain of riches, if you know where to look." Khan says "What did you say about weapons?" Mehrdad smiles and says "I know of many ancient weapons made by a European people called the Greeks." Visuals change to reflect what Mehrdad is saying while he narrates. "I discovered a scroll detailing a siege engine called the Helepolis. I forgot about it until years later when I stumbled upon the largest Iron deposit in Persia. Suddenly this engine seemed possible. Then I heard of plans in Town4 for a motor that can be used for... a variety of things." Scene returns to tent. Khan says "And you want me to help you build this... Helepolis." Mehrdad says "Yes. I have the plans and the ore, but I need your hands to build it. I will help you conquer Baghdad and all I want in exchange is governorship. The Abbasid Caliphate has been attacked



before, but never have Baghdad's walls been breached. Let us succeed together." Khülegü says "Very well. May Tengri shine upon our endeavors." Mehrdad says "And may Allah smile upon our undertakings."

In the morning the party continues westward and at one point a cutscene takes over gameplay. The party is riding through a Mode 7 desert. Firuz narrates, saying "I still have doubts about my defection, and my ability to protect the former Persian Empire. But there's no turning back now. And as Dara told me, I'm not in this alone. I can only hope, and ride westward." Fade out. Return to 2D view on overworld.

While they are riding west, the party converses. Eskandar says "Mehrdad and Khan want to take Baghdad, so maybe they're just working together because they want the same thing. I've heard 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend.'" Ahmad says "I don't believe that applies here. The Europeans thought the same thing, until Ögedei Khan broke a peace treaty with the Russian Galich-Vladimir." Paris says "Khülegü Khan and Mehrdad are working together, though. The Russians weren't fighting by Khan's side." After this a random battle will eventually happen. After it does, the conversation continues. Ahmad says "The situation doesn't strike me right. Two cobras will not work together to hunt the rat; they will fight to the death and the victor will claim his meal." Firuz says "So are you saying they will fight each other at some point?" Dara says "It's believable, given Mehrdad's unpredictable nature. Mehrdad only has 500 men but he also has that weapon, whatever it may be. They could fight a bloody battle, with us and Baghdad in the middle." Firuz says "And that could be just as bad as them attacking it together."

Party comes to area with a high number of random encounters, with a lot of ambushes. A boss battle occurs right before they reach an oasis. The boss reveals he is the last boss sent by Mehrdad to stop party. He is clad in heavy armor. Player can only defeat boss by dodging his attacks until he tires and retreats. After boss is defeated the number of random encounters slowly drops to normal.

After battle, party stands in a small oasis fed by irrigation trench. Ahmad says "I have it! It came to me while we were fighting. Resisting is not an option." The others say "What?!" Ahmad says "Do you remember the story of 1,001 nights?" Dara says "Of course. Queen Sahrzad delays her execution by telling King Shahryar a story every night, but leaves out the ending. The king, wanting to hear the end, spares her life for another day. This repeats every day until his heart eventually changes and he spares her life permanently." Firuz asks "Are you saying we should convince the Caliph to entertain Khan for three years?" Ahmad says "The Mongols spare those who surrender. I think that living another day should be the highest priority." Dara says "Hmm... You may be right. We don't know how powerful Mehrdad's weapon is. If it's blessed by Khan, I think we should assume the worst." Eskandar asks "What'll happen if Baghdad is destroyed?" Paris says "I've traveled to all corners of the Muslim world and beyond. Baghdad is the center of it, and has been for 500 years." Ahmad says "Not to mention a center of learning and trade." Dara says "And a crossroads between Africa, Europe, and Asia. The harbor of the world." Ahmad says "Simply put, if Baghdad falls, so will trade, learning, and ingenuity. Then the civilization responsible for Algebra, the fountain pen, and the tracheotomy, will fall." Dara says "Then it's decided. The Caliph must surrender to Khan. The fate of the world may well rest on it." Player regains control of Firuz and walks around oasis, talking to other party members. Party leaves.

Party rides west once again and at a certain point the 2D desert fades out while a Mode 7 desert fades in. Baghdad grows larger in the distance. Firuz narrates. "It's growing ever closer. A year ago I would have been too afraid to go ahead, for fear of what might happen should I fail. But I realize that I can't let fear stop me from taking action. If I fail to act, I have already failed." Party arrives at refugee camp. Refugees are going to Syria after a battle uprooted them. Merchants in the camp are selling sundries. Stay the night. Fade out.

"Yes, your majesty." shows atop black screen. Scene turns to Mehrdad in his camp. A soldier says "Our engineers have finished with the adjustments. We are now able to match the speed of a jogging man." Mehrdad says "Very good. Dismissed. How do you like that, General?" General Siavush scoffs. Mehrdad says "Still feeling sore about Town7, are you?" Siavush says "You didn't have to slaughter those people. Why are you doing this?" Mehrdad says "The reason does not concern you, general. You are to do as I wish, and I am doing



as Khan wishes.” Siavush says “And as for that—“ Mehrdad says “Is there another problem?” Siavush says “You are not the only opportunist. Do you not see that Khan is using you as you are him? What will happen when Khan no longer needs us?” Mehrdad says “You needn’t worry yourself with that. The moment shall never come.” Siavush asks “What do you mean?” Mehrdad says “I will rid my world of foreign power like the Egyptians did when they ransomed King Louis IX for 1,000,000 Dinars.” Siavush says “You would betray Khan, then hold him captive?” Mehrdad says “Then kill him!” Siavush says “You are toying with the lives of your men, Mehrdad! We will not survive th—“ Mehrdad says “Step down, general! If you value your well-being, you will silence yourself and follow my orders. Or perhaps you would like to return to Azarshah. I’m sure the laborers could use another hand. Is that understood?” Siavush says “Perfectly, your highness.” Mehrdad says “Dismissed!” Siavush leaves. In the middle of the night several silhouette horses leave the camp. Narration on screen: “He was right. They do need my help.” Fade to black.

In the morning Paris says “I have business south of Baghdad. So long.” Firuz says “When will we see you again?” Paris says “Oh, um, I’m sure we’ll bump into each other.” He leaves. Firuz and Dara look at each other. Dara says “Not one for sentimentalism, is he?” Party leaves refugee camp. Desert is now back to 2D. Party crosses Tigris about sunset and camps outside the Khurasan gate. As the others enter the tent, Firuz says to himself “But maybe it’s not fear that’s threatening to turn me around. Maybe it’s pushing me forward. The Mongols have shown us that fear can be a powerful motivator.” Firuz goes inside tent and scene fades out.

Flashback, c. 1231: Aryaburzin and Shahnavaz are sitting in a den. Shahnavaz says “But what about the prophecy? You know that we can’t tell our firstborn about his lineage.” Aryaburzin says “Well, we can’t let the lineage disappear, either. Neither Mehrdad nor I can sire children now. What else is there?” Shahnavaz says “Perhaps it would be safe to tell him when he is old enough to lead.” Camera switches to hallway. We see silhouettes of parents talking while Mehrdad is standing in the hallway. Mehrdad says “An older brother? To rule over me? No!” Aryaburzin and Shahnavaz hear him shout ‘no’ and turn to the entry. Shahnavaz says “Mehrdad?” Mehrdad walks in and says “I won’t let you! I won’t be ruled by someone else! Not Khan, not a Persian king, not a brother!” Aryaburzin says “It is his birthright. Besides, someone must carry on the royal line.” Mehrdad says “No! I was here the whole time! I wasn’t the one who was thrown away!” Shahnavaz says “Mehrdad!” Mehrdad runs out of the room. Shahnavaz shouts “Mehrdad!” Aryaburzin says “Let him go. [sigh] I think, on this one occasion, we should let him express his anger. This is a huge change, after all.” Mehrdad is pacing in his room. Mehrdad says “I can’t. I won’t. I won’t let them do it. I was here the whole time.” Camera sees a hand grab a dagger. Camera switches to entry of royal bedchambers. Mehrdad goes in. We hear screams, then Shahnavaz saying “I will always love you,” then Mehrdad comes out with a bloody dagger. He looks at it and laments what he did. Mehrdad says “No... Why?... The blood...” Mehrdad drops dagger. “Blood! Why did I? The blood... brother... my brother... he knows? Does he know, deep inside?” Mehrdad looks to the left and right. “Does he know? I must watch him. Forever I must watch him.” Mehrdad runs out of frame. Camera pans down to bloody dagger lying on floor. Fade out.

### **Part 3**

In morning party walk into the Khurasan gate of Baghdad. View changes to profile as party walks in the city gates among a stream of merchants, traders, etc. While they are moving Dara says “Although Baghdad is a grand sight, remember that we are not here to vacation. As soon as we have rested we must see the Caliph. I am off to the palace to request an audience.” Once inside the city the view switches back to overhead, Dara walks away, and the party is free to explore the city, including the Grand Library. After a while, Dara comes to Firuz and says “Let’s go.”

Party enters palace. When they approach the throne room a guard says “Right this way,” and leads them in. Dara says “You two wait out here.” Firuz and Dara go in. Fade out. Fade in inside throne room. Dara says “So you see, your Excellency, if you are to survive the imminent attack you must surrender to Khan.” Caliph says “Hmm... Have you come from Persia? I’ll bet you’re spies, here to sabotage my defenses.” Firuz says “No, sir. Look toward the east and you shall see Khan’s army advancing. You can even make out siege engines the

height of fifteen men. They will be here in a matter of time, Caliph.” Caliph says “Why would Khan attack me? He attacked my enemy, the Sultan Mohammed II of Khwarezmia. If Persia is under Khan’s rule, what difference does that make to me?” Dara says “Khan holds all Muslims in equal regard, and Mehrdad’s validation of that opinion only makes it stronger.” Caliph says “Enough of this. Have I done the Mongols wrong? An old adage reads ‘The enemy of my enemy is my friend.’ I have nothing to fear.” Ahmad enters the throne room and says “Caliph, if it may please you, I wish to relate my experience on my research trip in the Kingdom of Poland.”

Flashback: (Playable) Side-scrolling, Ahmad is collecting berries from a bush, then going back to his tent. As he is walking he thinks ‘Rumbling. Hundreds of horses are coming this way.’ Ahmad reaches his tent. (Not Playable) Overhead view, Ahmad looks at the path and sees Mongols riding past. Camera pans to show a Polish city by the forest. Battle commences. Narration “The battle was one-sided, and there were many one-sided battles after it. The Poles, once the allies of Khan, are now his subjects. Their cities, destroyed.” Fade out.

Fade in. Ahmad says “Even now, Khan is using king Mehrdad for his purposes.” Dara says “Caliph, we beg of you. Surrender to Khan. It is the only way Baghdad and her eminence will be spared.” A messenger enters the room and says “Caliph! A messenger from Khülegü Khan has ordered your unconditional surrender.” Caliph says “So you spoke the truth of Khan’s arrival? No matter. Messenger, tell Khan that I, Al-Musta’sim, shall use the Great Khan’s back as a footstool. Be gone.” Messenger says “Yes, sir,” and leaves. Caliph says “You three be gone as well. Return to the place from whence you came. Your land may be under the rule of Khan, but you cannot bring mine under it too.” Guards move forward and back party out of throne room.

Party once again has opportunity to explore Baghdad for several minutes as the Sun sinks behind the city walls. When party returns to Restaurant (or when it becomes dark, upon which party automatically returns to Restaurant), members (including Paris) sit around a dining rug. Eskandar asks “What are we going to do?” Paris says “Perhaps we can help to mobilize the forces. Being as underprepared as they are, Dara’s and Firuz’s tactical knowledge would definitely help.” Dara says “But would it matter? I think you are too confident in our ability.” Paris asks “What do you suggest?” Dara says “...The punishments of Khan are well-known, and very much feared. I doubt that the Caliph’s refusal to surrender represents the general opinion.” Paris says “So you are saying we should remove him?” Dara says “Yes. That seems the most likely option to succeed. We ask Khan to kill the Caliph and Baghdad will surrender.” Eskandar says “Couldn’t we bring the Caliph to Khan?” Dara says “No. With only five of us, the effort to capture him would surely fail. Ahmad, do you have any thoughts on this?” Ahmad says “Hmm... Well, if the army of Baghdad will surrender at the demise of the Caliph, then the Mongols would surely surrender at Khan’s.” Firuz says “Wait, Ahmad, you’re saying we should kill Khan?” Eskandar says “It would stop the invasion, all right.” Firuz says “...Dara, what do you think we should do?” Dara says “It’s up to you, sir.” Firuz says “Don’t call me ‘sir.’ I know I’m higher ranking, but...” Paris asks “After our travel we need a good night’s rest. You can have until morning to find your answer.” Control returns to player. Firuz is free to take care of some business, then goes to sleep. Save prompt.

In the morning Firuz walks outside. The others are waiting by the street. Dara says “Well, what should we do?” Firuz says “Umm...” Player chooses from three options:

- 1: Ask Khan to kill Caliph and spare others.
- 2: Help to mobilize Baghdad’s armed forces.
- 3: Assassinate Khülegü Khan.

The first option will result in secretly raised evasive ability for all party members, including Mikhail.

The second option will result in secretly raised attack power for Firuz and Dara.

The third option will result in secretly lowered shielding/armor for all party members, especially Firuz.

The events stemming from each option follow below, preceded by number, and end on page 12.

Note on choosing an option:

Firuz says “I think we should X.” Dara says “Always doubting yourself. Do you think, or are you sure?”

Confirmation prompt shows on screen which asks ‘Are you sure?’ If player selects ‘No,’ Firuz will say “No. Let me be sure this time,” and the three options will show once again. When next option is picked, there will be no prompt, and Firuz will say second response. If player selects ‘Yes,’ Firuz says second response, which is “Yes. I’m sure. We will X.”

**1:** Firuz says “I think we should meet with Khan and ask him to kill only the Caliph.” Dara says “Always doubting yourself. Do you think, or are you sure?” Firuz says “Yes. I’m sure. We will meet with Khan and ask him to only kill the Caliph.” Dara says “All right. Let us prepare. We’ll repel down the city walls under the cover of night.” Fade out.

Fade in. Party walks forward to parapet. Eskandar, Dara, and Ahmad keep a look out while Firuz fastens ropes to the wall. Eskandar says “Thank you for agreeing to take me along, Dara.” Dara says “I’m only doing it on Firuz’s wish. This is an extremely delicate situation. If you do anything to upset—” Eskandar says “Don’t worry. I won’t run off again.” Firuz says “Ready.” Dara says “All right. Let’s depart.” Camera cuts to outside of city wall, profile. Silhouettes of party members are seen rappelling down wall of Baghdad while crepuscular rays are seen on the horizon. Camera switches to ground level, regular view. Paris meets them on a horse, guiding two other horses in tow. Firuz says “Thank you, Paris,” as he gets on. Paris says “No problem. Are we ready?” Dara says “Yes. Let’s go.” Player regains control and party rides east to Mongol camp 0.6 miles (a minute at top speed) away. Party enters and automatically dismounts; party appears on foot in camp.

Party walks forward to large tent. Two Mongol guards stand by entrance of tent. One asks “What business do you have here?” Firuz says “We are here to discuss with Khülegü Khan the surrender of Caliph Al-Musta’sim and his city of Baghdad.” Guards look at each other and one of them says “Wait here,” then goes into the tent. A few seconds later Khan emerges. Khan says “Where is the Caliph?” Firuz bows and says “Mighty Khan, we have come to propose the Caliph’s undoing.” Khan says “Why does the Caliph not show his face to surrender?” Firuz says “He has shut himself away in his chambers. He will not listen to reason and we wish to sacrifice him for the greater good.” Khan says “How noble of you to make such a decision on his behalf.” Mehrdad walks into screen. Eskandar says “You!” Difficult QTE commences in which Eskandar reaches for his dagger.

**1a.** If player is successful, Paris restrains Eskandar and pushes his dagger into his sheath. Eskandar’s arm flies free and strikes Paris in the chest. Paris yells “Ow! You hit me right in my— chest!” Eskandar says “I’m sorry!” Khan says “What is this? Have you come to strike me down?” Dara says “No, Khan! This boy is just an idiot!” Eskandar says “I wished to bring justice to Mehrdad for killing my uncle! And all those other people.” Khan laughs “Is what you are undertaking any better? If Al-Musta’sim does not care for his people enough to surrender, I think it is better that he falls. Young man, bring me your dagger!” Eskandar looks at the others. Firuz says “Do it.” Eskandar slowly steps forward and takes off his sheath. He holds out the dagger and Khan takes it. Khan says “If you would kill one of your own, then I will make sure others fall by your own blade. By the way, I have had every intention of killing Al-Musta’sim for the past seven years. Coming here could not have changed anything. Bid Baghdad farewell, for in a few days it shall fall.” Two guards come forward and the party turns around. The guards follow them until the end of the screen.

**1b.** If player is unsuccessful, Paris is not quick enough and Eskandar draws his dagger. He runs a few steps forward and Dara tackles him. Dara shouts “Put it away! Idiot!” The archers ready their bows. Firuz raises his arms and says “Please hold your fire, Khan! We mean you no harm!” Khan says “Spies, are you? Come here to strike me down surreptitiously?” Dara jumps up and says “No, Khan! The boy is acting on his own stupid impulse!” Eskandar shouts “I’m sorry! I meant to kill Mehrdad, to bring

justice—” Khan shouts “Enough! Young man, bring me your dagger and shield.” Eskandar looks around. Dara pushes him toward Khan and says “Go!” Eskandar slowly steps forward and holds up his items. Khan takes them. He gives the shield to the soldier next to him and holds up the dagger. He says “If you would kill one of your own, then I will make sure this blade kills plenty of your kind. Be gone. Say goodbye to Baghdad, for it will soon fall.” Two guards escort group off screen.

Camera switches to outside of camp. Dara says “I told you not to make me regret bringing you!” Eskandar says “I’m sorry!” Dara says “Stupid boy! What if you were not stopped?” Paris says “Stop this. Eskandar lost his dagger (and shield). Is that not a good enough punishment?” Dara says “No! He needs to learn his lesson! Do you have any idea what could have happened—” Paris says “Let us return to the city. We can dwell on the hypothetical there.” Paris walks toward his horse. Firuz says “Might as well.” Rest of party follows. Dara is last to move. Player rides back to city walls. Party climbs up automatically, as screen fades. Party rests during black screen. Fade in.

Party is sitting at rug in Restaurant. Firuz asks “What are we going to do?” Eskandar says “Maybe we can try to kill Khan like Ahmad suggested.” Dara says “Your suggestions have no place in our adult conversation, boy!” Paris says “You don’t have to be hot-headed all the time, Dara! Ratchet down the testosterone!” Paris stands up. “I’m going to get a breath of fresh air.” Paris walks out. Dara stands up and says “I’m sorry, Paris!” and runs out. Firuz says “Uh, should we continue? Well... I think that, since the Mongols insist on defeating the Caliph, even taking Khan’s life wouldn’t change anything. In fact, it would anger the Great Khan to know we killed his little brother. Then our troubles would grow tenfold.” Eskandar says “What was the other idea? Help the army prepare?” Dara reenters and says “That would be useless. If my information is correct the garrison numbers 50,000, while the Mongols have easily ten times that.” Paris reenters and says “Not quite. Every Mongol soldier pitches five campfires at night to exaggerate his presence. Still, we are outnumbered by at least 100 percent.” Dara sits and says “And if the Caliph refuses to fight, Baghdad may as well have no force at all.” Paris sits. Eskandar says “So what do we do?” Paris says “What is there to do?”

Ahmad stands up and says “Accept our fate. Whether we survive this or not, we cannot escape what Allah has willed. I shall spend today in the House of Wisdom, amongst the books of Greek and Arabic philosophy and mathematics, before the scholars and translators who penned them are exterminated. I can think of no place I would rather spend my final hours.” Ahmad leaves. Eskandar asks “how can he just give up?” Firuz says “He has a point. We can’t escape our fate. Whether we are meant to be on the battlefield or in the library, we each have our place.” Dara says “Let us spend today enjoying today, while preparing for the siege. We may not have a tomorrow.” Player regains control and explores Baghdad until sundown. End of Option 1. Go to Part IV. One full day of exploration.

**2:** Firuz says “I think we should meet with the garrison and boost its capabilities.” Dara says “Always doubting yourself. Do you think, or are you sure?” Firuz says “Yes. I’m sure. We will meet with the garrison and boost its capabilities.” Dara says “All right. Let us prepare. We’ll meet with the chief minister at noon.” Fade out.

Camera shows Chief Minister Waziir drinking beer. Captain comes in, saying “Sir, there are two commanders from Azarshah to see you.” Waziir takes a gulp and says “Azarshah? Where is that?” Captain says “Western Persia, sir. They say it’s a matter of utmost importance.” Waziir takes another drink and says “Fine. [burp] Show them in.” Dara and Firuz enter. They ask him to accept their help in repelling the invasion. Waziir lets out a hearty laugh and says “Help us repel the Mongols, huh? Will you help our women drive them away with stones?” Firuz says “What are you talking about?” Waziir laughs again, saying “Little Khan will run away with his [burp] pitiful army when we, eh... whatever.” Firuz asks “Have you not heard the stories of their destruction? All who oppose them meet death!” Dara thinks ‘That smell....’ and says “What he means is, you are severely outnumbered and the Caliph does not take this threat seriously.” Waziir says “And why should he? Shall even great Baghdad fall to a horde of... slant-eyed fools? The im-penetrable fortress Alamut

surrendered without a fight, because they were cowards. But I! Waziir, Mief Chinister, shall not sway.” As he says this, his body sways. He continues, “I defy you—Khan! That is why I have reduced my army by, uh... this much.” Waziir falls over. An MP runs in and asks “What did you do?” Firuz says “Nothing! He just fell over!” MP helps Waziir up. Dara says “You’re inebriated!” Waziir says “I’m not as seem as I drunk!” Dara says “I can’t believe this! You intend to both reduce an army, and to lead it against Khan? And this is how you lead—falling over with drink? Does Allah smile upon your undertaking?” Waziir says “I knows I do! Three Allahs for everyone!” Dara says “Our words are wasted on this sacrilegious lout, Firuz. The Caliph and his peers cannot agree whether to strengthen their army, or to retire it. By doing both at the same time, they spell the doom of this city.” Waziir says “Get lost! I don’t need any o’ your lip!” Firuz says “He’s gone from funny to mean.” Dara says “That happens. In a minute he’ll get chummy. Let’s leave before we have to endure that.” As they leave Waziir says to MP “Have I ever told you that you look just like my son?” MP says “You don’t have a son, sir.” Waziir says “I love you!” and vomits on the floor. Fade out.

Party sits at rug in Restaurant. Paris says “A drunkard? I knew of the Caliph’s weakness for drink, but Waziir as well?” Dara says “Yes. He fell while insisting that his city would not.” Paris asks “Then what are we to do?” Eskandar says “Maybe we can try to kill Khan like Ahmad suggested.” Firuz says “I think that, since the Mongols insist on defeating the Caliph, even taking Khan’s life would not change anything.” Paris says “In fact, it would anger the Great Khan to know we killed his little brother. Then our troubles would grow tenfold.” Eskandar says “What was the other idea? Visit Khan and ask him to—?” Dara says “There’s not enough time for that. They seem ready to start the siege tomorrow. If that is the case we cannot afford to strain our energy riding out tonight.” Paris says “So you’re saying that we threw away our chance at averting crisis.” Dara says “So it would seem.” Eskandar says “So what do we do?” Paris says “What is there to do?”

Ahmad stands up and says “There remains one option. Accept our fate. Whether we survive this or not, we cannot escape what Allah has willed. I shall spend today in the House of Wisdom, amongst the books of Greek and Arabic philosophy and mathematics—,” Eskandar says “And Persian!” Ahmad says “Yes, and Persian mathematics, before the scholars and translators who penned them are exterminated. I can think of no place I would rather spend my final hours.” Ahmad leaves. Eskandar asks “how can he just give up?” Firuz says “He has a point. We can’t escape our fate. Whether we are meant to be on the battlefield or in the library, we each have our place.” Dara says “Let us spend today enjoying today, while preparing for the siege. We may not have a tomorrow.” Player regains control and explores Baghdad until sundown. End of Option 2. Party retires. Go to part IV. One full day of exploration.

**3:** Firuz says “I think we should attempt to assassinate Khülegü Khan.” Dara says “Always doubting yourself. Do you think, or are you sure?” Firuz says “Yes. I’m sure. We will attempt to assassinate Khülegü Khan.” Dara says “All right. Let us prepare. We’ll find the siege tent tonight. For now, let us prepare.” Paris leaves. Time from then until mid-afternoon is allowed for exploration.

At mid-afternoon an alarm is sounded and a brief cutscene of the front gates being closed shows. Dara says “This is it. We must get to the top of the walls and wait for Khan to come within range.” Eskandar says “Where’s Paris?” Dara says “I don’t know. He’s our best bowman, but he’s been gone since this morning.” Firuz says “I guess that means you’re up.” Dara says “Let’s go.” They reach the top of the walls by nightfall, evading guards. While party is hiding behind crates, soldiers are running back and forth, panicked. They are shouting things all at once, and only one blurb at a time is clearly readable by the player. They are saying “There are millions of them!” “Where is the Chief Minister?” “Captain! We must strengthen—” (reduces to nothing as soldier leaves screen) “They are breaking through!” “The siege engines are getting closer!” “Those engines are as tall as the gates!” “They’ll be here any minute!” Speech bubbles continue as party comes out from behind barrels. Party’s speech bubbles are visible on top of the other bubbles, which continue. Firuz comes from off screen and says “It’s within range. With this confusion, I don’t think anyone would stop you.” Dara says “Then here I go.” Dara walks to edge of wall and raises his bow.

Player controls aiming of bow from behind-the-shoulder. (Arrow will miss no matter what, though if player is accurate the punishment for choosing option 3 will not be as severe) Arrow strikes the ground next to Khan. Guards swarm in and protect him. As Khan is going back to his white tent he tells a guard to replace the white tarp with black. Dara says "I missed!" Firuz goes up to the edge of the wall and says "They're covering the tent with black tarp. What does that mean?" Ahmad says "It means that no quarter shall be given. Even if Caliph Musta'sim surrenders, none will be spared." They are silent. Eskandar says "Then we must fight. Even if we lose, we can't give up. If there's any chance we can repel them, we have to try." Dara says "Our boy is growing up." Firuz says "Let's go." End of option three. Go to Part V.

#### **Part IV**

During full day of exploration the "Mikhail the Georgian Spy" sidequest is available. Paris leaves the party once again.

Party can continue exploring until sundown. Alarm goes off. Dara says "They're at the gate!" Firuz says "It's too late to do anything!" Eskandar says "Then we must fight. Even if we lose, we can't give up. If there's any chance we can repel them, we have to try." Dara says "Our boy is growing up." Firuz says "Let's go."

#### **Part V**

Side-scrolling, background is loop of soldiers fighting. Bubble pops up over gameplay. Firuz says "We need to get to the front! If we can lead this chaos, maybe we'll have a chance!" When party reaches front line, (view switches to overhead) Baghdad Commander orders retreat. Party runs to safety while Georgians and Mongols advance. Party walks across balconies and rooftops in same direction as forces. They slide down a drainage pipe and hide behind rubble.

Khan and Caliph are following Mehrdad. Mehrdad says "There it is. His treasury!" Two Mongols open the doors and player sees treasures filling the room. Khan turns to Caliph and says "You would deny buying your city better protection, in favor of gold? Does your god bless this avarice?" Musta'sim says "What has happened is Allah's will." Khan says "Then what shall befall you is also his will." The two Mongols grab Musta'sim and put him in the room. Khan says "Stay in there a while." Musta'sim says "With no food or drink?" Khan says "NO! Eat of your treasure as much as you will, since you are so fond of it, for never shall you have aught else to eat." The doors are closed with Musta'sim inside.

Camera switches back to party hiding. Eskandar asks "Will Khan stop attacking now, since he has the Caliph?" Dara says "Not a chance. When Khan tells someone to surrender, he means it." They hear arrows being drawn. The camera cuts farther away to show nine Mongols with bows ready and the Arav leader. The party turns around and sees them. The Arav leader says "Khan wants to see you."

If option a.) is chosen above, move to next paragraph. If b.) or c.) is chosen above, Eskandar will jump to his feet and try to attack the nearest Arav member. Dara says "Stop! Stupid boy! Do you want to get us all killed?" Arav leader says "Give me your dagger! There shall be no more attacks from you!" Firuz says "Do it." Eskandar steps forward and surrenders his dagger, then steps back. Arav leader says "Khan will enjoy killing many a Muslim with your dagger. Now come with us."

Firuz says "We have no choice." They walk off screen while the Arav surrounds them. Fade out. Fade in. The party is standing with their backs to the screen. Upstage is Khan and his aides. In the background are burning buildings and a few hurtling projectiles. In the foreground are civilians and soldiers running about while horseback Mongols mow them down.

Khan says "You are the ones who (fought even though you came to me as messengers / sought to make up the Caliph's mind for him / tried to assassinate me). I must say I admire your perseverance." Commander Nergüi says "Show mercy, Khülegü. At least on Firuz." Firuz thinks "Hey, she's the one who saved my life in Town4." Khan says "Perhaps. But for now, let's move on to more pressing—" Mehrdad yells "Stop!" from off-screen.



He walks into frame and says “Stop destroying the city! Kill as many as you wish, but spare the city—or you won’t see the secret treasure!” Khan says “Is that your only playing card? Is treasure all you care about? You remind me of the Chinese. I HATE the Chinese! Greedy, proud, lavishing on their dead the same wealth they refused to share with us! Disgusting!” Mehrdad says “You are forgetting that I have power from above! My helepoles are as tall as the city gates.” Khan says “You are forgetting that those siege engines were built by Mongol hands.” An aide lights a small firecracker which flies into the sky.

Camera cuts out to outside the city. The firecracker detonates above the walls. Camera cuts to close angle and player sees two sets of hands pulling out a large bolt. Camera cuts to previous angle as Mongol rides horse away from crumbling siege engine. The other two fall as well. Camera moves back to Party. Khan says “Thank you for placing all of your men inside those towers. They were quite easy to eliminate. And now all of that iron will make good armor for my soldiers.” Mehrdad says “I will destroy you!” He looks at Firuz and says “Join me, brother!” and rushes towards Khan. Khan takes out Eskandar’s sword.

A missile crashes into the ground a few feet from Khan and throws dust into the air. The silhouettes of three horses ride through the dust cloud and pick up Eskandar, then come back and pick up Firuz, Dara, and Mehrdad. The horses ride off-screen. The horses come to the city doors. Mongols guarding the entrance raise their bows. The horses veer to the left and Paris, who is steering them, says “We have to go around!” The horses ride to the left off-screen. Switches to Full Motion Video.

Close-up of Firuz as he watches events unfold in shock: the Grand Library of Baghdad being torn to the ground, its scrolls and codices being tossed into the canals, a civilian woman being held down by a female Mongol while a male Mongol prepares to rape her, a horseback Mongol piercing a retreating soldier’s back with a javelin, and Caliph Musta’sim being trampled by horses while wrapped in a rug.

Outside of city. While the three horses are riding away, Firuz is holding on to Dara’s shoulders while his eyes are tightly shut. Camera pans to Baghdad burning. Fade out. Save prompt.

## Act III (1265 A.D.)

### Part 1

Title card: Seven Years Later

Fade in to see Eskandar count change in his hand while saying “48... 49... 50.” He emerges from the shade of a rock wall outside a village and says “Time to buy another.” Player gains control and Eskandar walks off-screen. Eskandar walks from the border of a small town to the weapon shop. Once inside Eskandar walks to the counter. Player chooses which weapon to buy. Once he does the shopkeeper smiles and says “Thank you once again for your patronage. Please return soon.” Eskandar walks back to his hut. If player attempts to leave town Eskandar turns around and says “I should take this home to the others.” When Eskandar reaches home computer takes control, then he walks behind his hut and buries the weapon he bought. An old passer-by asks him “Why are you burying that thing?” Eskandar says “So that no others may fall by my weapon, like those in Baghdad.” Passer-by asks “Did you fight alongside Commander Firuz of Azarshah?” Eskandar asks “How did you know that?” The passer-by says “I heard it from a traveler who’s riding with me.” Eskandar says “A traveler?” The passer-by says “Yeah, a real rogue-ish type. Boy, the stories this fellow could tell of his journeys!”

Paris emerges from the back of the passer’s-by wagon. Eskandar says “Paris?” Paris says “Firuz needs our help. The Mongols are planning—” Eskandar says “No. I don’t want to see any of you again. I want to put that part of my life behind me.” Paris says “Running from your problems won’t make them go away. I know that all too well.” Eskandar says “Well, I can try, can’t I?” and goes into his hut. Player gains control of Paris. Paris can explore the town before going into Eskandar’s hut.



Most of the townspeople think that Eskandar is crazy but harmless. When Paris enters the weapons shop the shopkeeper says “Good day. If it’s swords you’re after, I’m afraid a crazy young man bought my last one yesterday. My blacksmith is hard at work making more.” Paris says “Tell me about this crazy young man.” The shopkeeper says “He comes here almost every day to buy up as many weapons as he can, then leaves town until he has more money. I don’t know where he gets it all, but he’s making me rich! [laughs]” Paris says “Aren’t you the least bit concerned how Eskandar manages to scrape up the money?” The shopkeeper says “Who? Oh, him. Well, his money is as good as anyone else’s, eh? Besides, that kid has made me 100,000 dinars over the past four years. I won’t say no to that! [laughs]” Paris says “You disgust me!” and leaves. Paris goes into Eskandar’s hut.

Eskandar says “I told you to go away!” Paris says “You can’t hide from your duty to Firuz, who stood by you in times of despair.” Eskandar says “Duty? What about my duty to the million people who were killed in Baghdad? What about my duty to my uncle Jamshad, who gave himself to making others’ lives better? I can’t save anyone. But I sure can kill! Khan used my sword to slay—too many to count.” Paris says “That couldn’t be helped, but you can make a difference now. The Mongols are going to strike Azarshah in two months. Don’t you see how important this is?” Eskandar says “No.” Paris says “Azarshah is the last city of resistance to the east of Constantinople!” Eskandar says “So? Without Baghdad the Islamic civilization is just a relic. A fond memory. Life goes on, but even if we save Firuz’s city, we won’t get it back. A city isn’t worth fighting for.” Paris asks “But is Firuz? You lament that you couldn’t save your uncle, yet you have the opportunity to protect Firuz and you’d throw it away?” Eskandar says “Don’t mention my uncle! You are not worthy of it, you warmonger! All he ever did was help other people! Do you want me to carry on his legacy by killing?” Paris walks out of the hut.

Paris walks around to the back of the hut and pulls a sword out of the sand. He walks back and into Eskandar’s hut. Eskandar says “What are you—“ and backs against the wall. Paris says “Is this how you wish to live? In fear? Are you willing to be killed just to test your neighbor’s loyalty?” Eskandar says “No!” Paris lowers his sword and says “We are facing conquerors who are not willing to negotiate, thanks to the errors of lesser men. If you do not take up arms you will be killed by he who does. You have a chance to defend your friend. Will you join me?” Eskandar is silent for a second then says “Yes.”

They walk outside. Paris says “Mr. Babak? Now where did that old man go?” A townsman says “He left a few minutes ago. Muttered something about forgetting why he was here.” Paris says “[sigh] Let’s buy a horse and get out of here.” Fade out. Fade in on overworld. Free for sidequests.

When party rests for night, perspective changes to a prison in Prisentown at night. Inside, three guards are talking. Guard 1 says “Why wait until the morrow? I say execute him now.” Guard 2 says “Because the governor wants to hold off as long as possible; give Azarshah a little time to reconsider.” A silhouette sneaks past the three guards—it is seen as soon as Guard 2 starts to say “give.” Guard 3 says “Reconsider what?” Guard 2 says “The ransom fell through. Azarshah said “Kill him.” Imagine that! Their own king!” Guard 1 says “I guess their wickedness came back to them, and some tragedy made them turn on Mehrdad.” Camera changes to standard bird-eye view and Dara is standing around a corner, out of sight of the guards. Player is given control and as player moves away, speech bubbles appear from off-screen for a few yards, then stop appearing. If player does not move too far away, the rest of the conversation will be heard. It goes like this: Guard 3 says “Imagine that. Your own country doesn’t pay for your ransom, and you die alone. What man could bear that thought?” Guard 1 says “Oh, he may look like a man, but he’s a monster. No man could kill thousands of fellow Persians without a second thought.” Guard 3 says “Where is he, anyway?” Guard 2 says “Up on the third floor. A jump from that high would kill anyone, even a monster. I’ll take you to his cell after I show you the area you’ll be patrolling. Come on. I’ll talk to you later.” Guard 2 says “Bye.” as Guard 1 and Guard 3 walk down the corridor. Dara thinks “If they spot me, it’s over.”

The player must guide Dara up a flight of stairs. When the screen blanks to transition from stairs to second floor, a prompt shows which says “Hold Y to see through Dara’s eyes.” This allows a first-person view that will let player see guards down corridors. Since Dara is camouflaged, the guards will not be able to see him within a few yards. If they do, however, Dara will be swarmed with guards and the alarm will be sounded. Dara walks across floor and to second flight of stairs. Dara thinks “I have to find an empty room with a window to repel out of.” When that is done Dara thinks “Now for Mehrdad.” Dara must check doors while hiding from guards until he finds Mehrdad. Dara picks the lock and enters. Mehrdad says “What do you want now?” Dara says “Shh! I’m here to rescue you.” Mehrdad says “I’m not going anywhere! I demand to be released! I am the king of Azarshah!” Dara looks behind him, turns back and says “Shh! There are too many guards for me to fight off! We need to go now!” Mehrdad says “Not until I receive word from my commandant! I will be—” Dara steps forward and clutches Mehrdad’s neck and M falls unconscious. Dara says “Perfect. Let’s go,” then picks up and carries Mehrdad. Dara’s speed decreases because of the extra weight. He must continue to avoid guards (a third of first-person view is blocked by Mehrdad’s body) and move to the room with repelling rope. Camera pans out to show silhouettes repelling down wall and onto horse. Horse rides away at dawn with two bodies on it.

Perspective changes back to Eskandar and Paris. They are travelling through a corridor between two mountains in the Zagros, downhill. The Paris’ Past Sidequest is available on the path by a cliff. Continue down corridor. Cutscene shows them moving along (in battle viewer) on their horses. Eskandar says “Paris, I’m a little confused. Paris says “About what?” Eskandar says “Seven years ago we did everything we could to make sure Baghdad did not resist the Mongols. Why now do you say we must defend Azarshah?” Paris says “Khülegü intended to destroy it ever since we escaped Baghdad, but when he died before the attack could occur, Kublai Khan promised on his grave that Azarshah would fall before the last daffodils blossom.” Changes to overworld and eventually random encounter is fought. Camera stays in battle viewer and conversation continues. Eskandar says “So if the Mongols want to destroy it anyway...” Paris says “...then they’ll have to earn it with their blood. The world has changed; we can’t allow ourselves to be pushed around anymore. Even if Azarshah is lost, Khan will know that the world is not simply his to take.” Eskandar says “And what does Firuz think of this?” Paris says “Well... we’ll get to that later.” Party finishes descending the mountain pass and arrives in Kermanshah. When party leaves Kermanshah, a brief cutscene shows an executioner and two guards coming to Mehrdad’s cell. Executioner finds it empty. He says “The prisoner has escaped! Send out a search party!” Camera cuts to outside of prison compound as several silhouette horses ride away into the morning. Fade out. Fade in at campsite where Dara and Mehrdad are staying.

Dara is putting out a pit fire while Mehrdad is sitting against a date tree, asleep. Mehrdad awakes and looks around. Dara says “Good morrow.” Mehrdad stands up and is immediately pulled back down; he thinks “I’m bound!” Mehrdad asks “Where am I? Why have you brought me here?” Dara says “ ‘Thank you for rescuing me, Dara!’ ‘Oh, you’re welcome, Mehrdad!’ ” Mehrdad says “I was to be rescued! My people were to show the financial might of Azarshah by paying my ransom! And YOU have taken that demonstration away! FIEND! KHAR! DIV-E- SEPID!” Dara says “\*clears throat\* Although I cannot dispute the veracity of any of those claims, I must point out that you were to be executed this morning.” Mehrdad says “I won’t be disgraced by leaving without ransom. My power and command will not be threatened!” Dara says “No one is threatening your power, Mehrdad! Because you don’t have any. You can thank a coup d’état for that.” Mehrdad says “A coup?” then bows his head. “My plan fell apart. I was to rule all of the Middle East.” His head snaps back up and he says “Then she would have begged for my forgiveness!” Dara shakes his head, looks up, and says “Of all the reasons... Did you intend to overthrow the Abbasids just because a woman insulted you?” Mehrdad says “I will not let her get away with it! I should have stoned that bitch when I had the chance!” Dara asks “Would lapidation solve all your problems? If your shoe comes untied, will you stone it?” Mehrdad says “What do you want from me?!” Dara says “I want you to help Firuz defend Azarshah from invasion. It was fortified under your command; you ought to know something of its defense capabilities.” Mehrdad says “Never. You took it from me! I will never help you and I hope your conquerors leave no stone unturned!” Dara says “You loved that city as much as anyone. Will you allow it to be destroyed?” Mehrdad says “First you throw me out of power, then you ask for my help? Untie me, so I can kill you!” Dara asks “Is this how you would repay me for saving your life?” Mehrdad asks “Why did you save me? Just so you could enslave me? I will not yield!” Dara says

“Why? Is it because you won’t live in a world where you’re not at the top? Fine, if you don’t want to be in this world, then I’ll leave you here instead. Tsk, tsk. Snatched from death row only to be picked clean by buzzards. What a way to go.” Dara walks away and begins packing his things. Mehrdad says “You will not leave me to die! I am Emperor Mehrdad Azarnejad! Do not go! [pause] Please!” Dara stops. Mehrdad says “Please! I’m begging you! I’m sorry for exploding like that.” Dara turns around and takes a few steps toward Mehrdad, and says “Then perhaps you understand that we share an enemy; an enemy who destroyed your army and almost killed you.” Mehrdad says “Yes, I do! I have wasted away in prison for six years. Anything would be better than dying tied to this tree, even if it means falling in battle against the Mongols.” Dara says “There’s hope for you yet. We can help you to cope with your temper, if you’ll let us. In the meantime, I have to keep you tied up, at least until we reach TownE.” Mehrdad bows his head and says “...Fine.” Dara finishes packing up, puts Mehrdad on a horse, then gets on his own horse. The two ride off-screen.

Dara and Mehrdad ride south through a Zagros valley to a mountain passage. There are a couple of towns and sidequests on the way. In the passage the camera switches to sidescroller as the player guides them along. The subject of Mehrdad’s wife is somehow brought up. Mehrdad says “She was the most beautiful woman in Azarshah, so I took her for my wife.” Scene fade to conference room of Azarshah palace, where Mehrdad is standing next to the battle table speaking to his wife Ziba. Voiceover: “Our happiness didn’t last long, though.” Mehrdad says “Sure Ziba, Azarshah is of modest size, but it is wealthy and powerful.” Ziba says “That’s not what I mean, Mehrdad. I want to feel YOUR power. I want you to take me in your arms.... What am I saying? Obviously that can never happen, eunuch that you are.” Mehrdad says “And that is why you chose to lie with that other man.” Ziba says “Yes. And you won’t do a thing about it, will you? Prissy boy.” Ziba walks out and Mehrdad bows his head in sadness. Voiceover: “I tried to show Ziba my power. I forced the rank of Commander of Elite Forces on my brother.” Scene fades to throne room. Firuz, standing before Mehrdad and Ziba to M’s right, says “Your highness, surely there is another who would be better fit for this command. I am but the humble son of a nobleman.” Mehrdad says “Do you doubt my royal judgment?” Firuz says “No, sir. I was merely—” Mehrdad says “Your first assignment shall be to intercept the Mongol tribute collector, who is on his way to Hamadan. You are to kill him and his escorts, then bring the tribute money back here.” Firuz says “What? Your majesty, with all due respect, won’t this incite the Mongols to retaliate?” Mehrdad says “Yes, but not against us. You see, you will be wearing this Farsi uniform.” He points to a royal aide wearing a Farsi military uniform. Mehrdad says “The Mongols will think Shiraz needs to be punished for this offense. It’ll be easier for me to spread my empire if my future subjects are too weak to fight back, eh?” Mehrdad laughs. “Oh, but of course, leave one Mongol alive so that your deeds will be known.” Firuz says “King Mehrdad, I cannot under good conscience carry out these orders!” Mehrdad stands up and says “Traitor! Then will you let this country perish?!” Firuz says “No, I—” Mehrdad continues “Will you allow us to suffocate under the rule of Qaraqorum while our finances are drained away?! How dare you!” Mehrdad is now in front of Firuz who is kneeling on the floor. Firuz says “I beg your forgiveness, King Mehrdad!” Mehrdad says “Ögedei Khan made Azarshah independent. If that be the case, let us exercise our will.” Mehrdad goes back and sits on his throne. He continues “I will one day reunite the Persian Empire and push our subjugators back to Mongolia. And you will carry out my orders, Commander. Now go. A detail awaits you outside.” Firuz stands and says “Yes, sir.” He backs off screen. Mehrdad says “Yes, that is right. You follow my orders. How is that for power, love?” Ziba says “Eh.”

Fades out. Fade in on Dara and Mehrdad coming down passage. Dara says “But it didn’t matter, did it?” Mehrdad says “No. She left me the first chance she had. She ran off with an ambassador from Ethiopia. If I had gained control of Baghdad, she would have seen the mistake she made abandoning me.” Dara says “What she did to you was awful, but you must let it go, for no amount of conquest will buy her love or respect.” Mehrdad says “Perhaps I knew that. Still, I was prepared to prove myself, no matter the cost.” Dara says “Is that how you were so easily able to enslave Azarshah? That level of disregard for your own people makes me sick.” Mehrdad says “Did Muhammad’s stomach complain when he fasted? No. So why should I feel sorry for making necessary sacrifices to build an empire?” Dara says “You are unbelievable. I have no idea why you became king instead of your brother.” Mehrdad says “I AM THE KING! ME! HE WAS NEVER THERE! I was in the

palace all along! And I was going to be king!” Dara says “And that’s why you made sure he stayed your subordinate, isn’t it? Then when your supremacy was challenged, you killed his family, right?” Mehrdad: “...”

During random encounter Dara and Mehrdad are reunited with Paris and Eskandar. Members converse briefly and prepare to depart. Dara tells Eskandar to give drink to Mehrdad. He does so. Dara asks “Were you able to find something, Paris?” Paris rides his horse up to Dara and says “Yes. When I was in Egypt I spoke to a doctor in Alexandria. He gave me Lithium and said that it should help calm Mehrdad’s explosiveness.” Dara says “So we put a bit in his food every day?” Paris says “Of course, nothing will replace daily man-to-man counsel, but yes. It should help.”

Simultaneously Mehrdad and Eskandar are speaking in between water. Mehrdad says “You look familiar. Have I seen you before?” Eskandar says “Yeah. You killed my uncle Jamshad, then burned my village to the ground.” Mehrdad says “Oh, right.... Sorry about that.” Eskandar says “...Whatever.” Mehrdad says “It must take a lot of restraint not to harm me now.” Eskandar says “You’ve got that right. Believe me, I’m not doing it for you. I’m doing it for my uncle, who would never have hurt another person.”

Dara looks back and says “Are you ready, Eskandar?” Eskandar says “Yes. Let’s go.” They ride off-screen.

The party reaches Kermanshah. When they turn in for the night, scene fades to black as normal. A voiceover says “And that’s why you killed his wife and children, isn’t it?” Fade in to show Laleh and her two sons standing against wall. Several soldiers are guarding them with weapons drawn. Mehrdad walks in. Laleh says “Please, let my boys go free!” Mehrdad says “I cannot sire children. Why should I let Firuz? Am I to let my heir be the son of a traitor?” Laleh says “What? What are you talking about?” Mehrdad says “Why, Firuz is my older brother, given up for adoption out of fear for a prophecy; one fabricated by an old fool for political gain.” Laleh says “You’re brothers?” Mehrdad says “Why, yes, we share blood. We are the same.” Laleh says “No! No! You’re a monster!” Mehrdad says “I am your king, and it shall do me great pleasure to punish you personally.” Laleh asks “What is our crime?” Mehrdad says “You are the family of a traitor. What he did you shall suffer for.” Laleh says “You just said you are his brother. Shall you punish yourself, too?” Mehrdad raises his sword and steps forward. He stops, lowers it, and says “I can’t.” He points to a soldier and says “You, there! Kill her!” The soldier runs her through. Both sons shout “Mom!” and cradle her in their arms. Mehrdad says “These two, however....” He raises his sword and strikes. The screen goes black right as the sword makes contact. Scene switches to room where Mehrdad awakens and shouts “NO!” The others awaken and jump out of bed. Dara says “What? What is it?” Mehrdad says “I’m a monster!” Eskandar walks off screen and the room becomes lit. Dara asks “Did you have a nightmare?” As Eskandar walks back onscreen Mehrdad says “I wish it were. No, a memory.” Paris says “It’s going to take a long time, Mehrdad. Many tears will be shed before you stop hating yourself.” Camera switches to outside caravanserai. The only lights onscreen are the moon and the light of their second story room. Voiceover says “But what matters is that one day it will be reached.” Fade out.

In the morning the characters are still in bed. A speech bubble from outside says “Search every building! They couldn’t have gotten very far.” Paris’ eyes open. He gets up and looks out the window. He turns around and says “Get up, everyone. We’re leaving at once.” He unties Mehrdad as the others get out of bed and grab their things. Eskandar asks “What’s wrong?” Paris says “A troop of armed men is looking for someone, presumably us. Dara, look out the window.” Dara walks towards it and Paris asks “Are they from Prisontown?” Dara looks and says “Yes. They must have dispatched a search party when they saw that Mehrdad was gone.” Paris says “Is everyone ready?” The others nod. Paris says “Good. Wait a few seconds, then you three sneak out the back. I’ll stall the soldiers from Prisontown.” Dara says “I am not going to—” Paris “We have no time! As each second passes, we draw nearer to discovery. Go!” Paris walks out. Switches to town view. Paris walks out of caravanserai and says “Hello, there! Why do you disturb my sleeping guests?” PCaptain says “We are looking for King Mehrdad of Azarshah. Do you know anything of his whereabouts? Is he in your caravanserai, perhaps?” Paris says “No. How should I know where he is?” PCaptain says “Do not insult me! For nearly six years Prisontown has built up its military enough to have courage to ransom King Mehrdad. First, they refuse to pay, then the king mysteriously disappears! If someone came to snatch him away, they couldn’t have gotten much farther than Kermanshah.” Paris says “My caravanserai is a place of peace and rest. You shall not pass.

Go home.” PCaptain says “Oh, no! The little man with the high voice told us to go home!” The other three soldiers laugh.

Camera switches to back of caravanserai, where Dara and Eskandar are loading a large object covered with a blanket onto a horse. A townsman says “Would you like help?” Dara says “Oh no, thank you. We’re conducting matters of military. You see, we’re a decoy party. The soldiers from Prisontown think we have King Mehrdad, when really he is being taken to Tehran. We’re loading this cargo to trick them.” The townsman says “You vile creatures! Aiding Mehrdad the Slaughterer?” He runs off. Switch to previous scene.

Paris says “I owe you nothing.” PCaptain says “Step aside, little man. My sword means business.” An old man comes out and says “Greetings, young men. Would you care to rest your weary haunches in my caravanserai?” PCaptain pauses for a second, then quickly draws his sword and moves to strike Paris, who blocks the sword with his arm-blade. Paris draws his sword as the battle viewer opens. Paris must fight four of the soldiers and prevent them from entering the caravanserai. (If one does, Dara will not join the fight. If two do, Eskandar will not join either. If all three do, the other four soldiers will come out right then.) After all three soldiers are defeated, or after one minute, Dara and Eskandar will come from inside the caravanserai and help in the fight. When all eight soldiers are close to defeat, the townsman from before will yell “They’re a decoy! Mehrdad is on his way to Tehran!” PCaptain says “It’s a trick? Move out!” They leave and some of the townspeople come outside. Many people, whether inside or out, boo and hiss at the party. Some say “Go away, demons of Azarshah!” or “If only Mehrdad were here!” They then begin to throw things at the party. Dara says “Let’s get out of here, and fast.” They run off-screen.

The camera switches to outside of Kermanshah, on horse-back; still battle-viewer. Paris says “Thank you for not leaving. I couldn’t have taken them on my own.” Dara says “Sometimes stubbornness pays off, eh? There was no way I was leaving you alone against that troop. You know, this is the second time we’ve escaped Kermanshah, first from their conquerors, then from the conquered.” Paris says “Your Public Relations could use some help, that’s for sure.” Mehrdad says “You should have given me to them.” Dara says “What?” Mehrdad says “I have to answer for my crimes.” Eskandar says “You’ve got that right.” Dara says “Eskandar, please! Mehrdad, your priority right now is to serve your country by defending it. After this is over, we’ll see what happens. I can’t guarantee it’ll end well. Just now those townspeople rioted against us even though we protected them; those soldiers would have destroyed the town if it meant finding Mehrdad.” Eskandar says “What would they do if we protected all of Persia?” Dara says “There’s no way we could. We can only better our own... I think I know what to say to Firuz.” Camera switches to overworld standard. Player regains control.

In a town on way, party stays at a stranger’s house. Eskandar says that these people are far kinder than he expected. Man of the house says “After the kindness The Salamander has shown us, we have embraced Azarshah.” Eskandar says “Who’s Salamander?” Dara says “You’ll see when we get to TownE.”

## **Part 2**

Party journeys to TownE. When party goes to building Dara says “The rest of you wait outside. Maybe go to the café, or something.” Dara walks in and goes down the staircase. Firuz is shoveling ash out of a furnace and into a large wooden bucket. Embers can be seen floating off and disappearing. Dara says “Hello, Firuz. Still shoveling that ash, I see.” Firuz, without stopping, says “Yep. Gotta make tar. Khan wants the streets of Kermanshah paved.” Dara says “Listen, Firuz,” Firuz ceases his work, turns to Dara, and interrupts. “We’ve been over this before.” Dara says “Yes, many times, and I feel you’re making good improvement.” Firuz says “From what? A failure?” Dara says “No, you’re—” Firuz says “I failed to protect Azarshah. I failed to protect Town4, and Baghdad. Why do you persist?” Dara says “We all failed, Firuz. The burden is not yours to bear alone.” Firuz says “Well why not? I led our troop, didn’t I?” Dara says “This is pointless! I told you before, Baghdad would have fallen no matter what.” Firuz says “How do you know that, Dara? Maybe Khülegü would have stopped if we left! Maybe we drove him to it!” The glowing embers in the bucket of ash become brighter and more numerous. Dara says “Khülegü told us himself he planned the siege long before any of us were a part

of it.” Firuz says “Oh, well, what a great comfort that is.” Dara says “Come on, Firuz! It’s been seven years! Let the past go!” Firuz says “It hasn’t let itself go! The people who died seven years ago are still dead! One of the greatest cities on Earth was simply erased!” Dara says “And none of us can change any of that, so why not learn to accept it?” Some of the embers are floating into the air now. Firuz says “Why not? Why should I accept their deaths? Am I to approve of my failure? I couldn’t stop—” Dara says “You have the chance to stop more deaths from occurring now, if you’re willing to face the challenge. You’re a wonderful leader, and you have the opportunity to defend your home, if you’re willing. But you have to stop doubting yourself and wallowing in your self-pity. Why aren’t you willing to face your failure and grow stronger from it?” Firuz says “I’m not d—” Dara says “Just because you don’t want something to happen doesn’t mean it’ll go away if you ignore it. And I’m not going away either.” The embers recede somewhat. Only one or two fly up now. Firuz says “I already knew that; you’re far too stubborn. Dara, I appreciate what you’re trying to do, but right now I need time to be with myself.” Dara says “Well, your time is quickly drawing to a close.” Dara leaves.

When Dara walks outside he is immediately thrust into battle. Soldier after soldier comes into the fight. After the third one, Eskandar joins fight. After fourth, Paris and Mehrdad join. After a few more, the battle ends. Dara asks “These are Prisontown soldiers! What are they doing here?” Paris says “They discovered we weren’t really taking Mehrdad to Tehran and followed us here.” Dara says “Speaking of running from your problems....” A group of soldiers back the four against the front of the tar plant which Firuz is inside. Dara says “Mehrdad, go into the tar plant and hide.” Mehrdad says “No. We’re more likely to survive if we stick together.” The captain says “Well don’t just stand there! Get them!” Another battle starts. While the other three are busy with a fight of their own, the captain knocks Dara’s sword out of his hand. He goes in for the kill, but Firuz blocks the hit with his shovel. Firuz knocks the captain out with it. The other soldiers are defeated.

Dara says “Firuz! I thought you couldn’t save the world.” Firuz says “What are you talking about? I just wanted to save my friend.” Dara says “Hmm. Does that mean that you see the difference between doing what you can, and trying to do what you can’t?” Paris says “No man can change the world, Firuz.” Dara says “But if the whole world is a circle, and each man can change his own degree, then what more could one hope for?” Eskandar says “And what if you inspire another man to better his own degree, as my uncle inspired me?” Firuz says “Then, I guess, if enough men work together, a whole radian could be bettered.” Dara says “Now you’ve got it. Just better your own degree of the world. You’ve been frustrated all these years because you feel you must do the impossible, yet you know you cannot. It’s enough to drive a man mad.” Firuz says “So what of this siege? Is fending off the Mongols possible?” Siavush comes from off-screen. He says “The Mamluks have had limited success repelling the Mongols, and Azarshah has many advantages they do not.” Firuz says “Who are you?” Siavush says “You don’t recognize me?” Mehrdad says “General Siavush!” Siavush says “Indeed. After you threatened to kill me for protesting your policies, I rode with a few dissidents to Azarshah and freed it. We’ve spent the time since staying prepared for an attack.” Mehrdad says “Listen, I’m sorry about the whole... threatening to kill you thing.” Siavush says “Let us not dwell on the past while the present moves ever forward. We must proceed to Azarshah as soon as possible, your highness.” Firuz shakes his head and says “Please, just call me Firuz, Salamander.” Siavush says “Salamander! Of all the titles the people could have given to me....”

Firuz can walk around site and speak to the other party members. When he walks off screen, switches to overworld. Party goes toward Azarshah. Met with heavy resistance along the way. Paris leaves party at first opportunity. At one point between towns Siavush tells the party in battle view how he regained Azarshah. (flashback begins) He says that his men spied on Azarshah for four years and took advantage of a flaw that allowed them to slip into the city and do away with Mehrdad’s soldiers. “After that, whenever someone approached Azarshah, the city gates were closed, the soldiers took their battle stations, and an armed party was sent out to meet the approaching person.” (end flashback) “Ever since Azarshah fell under Mongolian rule its mission has been to become more isolated- a tradition I have honored.” Dara says “Let’s hope that tradition serves us well.” Party continues on.

They meet Mikhail in Town2. He says “Oh, thank goodness I found you! I knew you would be here, and you are!” Eskandar says “Mikhail! I thought you went back to Georgia!” Mikhail says “I did, but I had to leave.

Georgia is being torn apart. The land that isn't controlled by the Mongols is being fought over by warlords- like dogs fighting over scraps." Firuz says "And you came all the way to Persia to seek us out? That's... really touching, Mikhail." Mikhail says "I spent only a short time helping you, but I would like to stand by you once again, King Firuz." Firuz thinks "No! even he calls me 'King'." then says "You can call me just Firuz. And I would be honored if you would join us once again." Mikhail joins party and party continues to Town1.

Nergüi is in her tent playing a morin khuur. While she is playing she thinks "Firuz draws nearer. He must be warned. I know what I must do." Show her hands playing (semi-transparent) over party riding south to Town1 in battle view. "Trust my words, Firuz. I shall see you soon." Shows party riding on overworld. Music and Nergüi's hands fade out to show just overworld. Party comes to a halt just short of Town1 and player regains control. In Town1 Siavush says "Even though Azarshah is only a few minutes away, we should rest for the night here to be well-prepared- if that's okay with you, King Fi— I mean, Firuz." Firuz says "That's fine. The caravanserai is right over there. Let's go." When they're in the caravanserai, A cloaked figure approaches Eskandar and says "Don't go to Azarshah." Eskandar says "What? Why? Who are you?" Figure says "An admirer of Firuz. Qaragan, the brother of Khülegü, has overtaken Azarshah and awaits Firuz's arrival. If you approach the gates, archers will kill all of you." Camera cuts to party standing in caravanserai room. Eskandar comes in and says "The Mongols are in Azarshah!" Firuz says "What?" Eskandar says "A woman wearing a cloak told me that Qaragan has taken Azarshah and he is awaiting Firuz's return. We can't approach the city gates." A knock is at the door. Paris comes in and asks "How are things here, King Firuz?" Firuz thinks "Aargh! King!" Eskandar says "Azarshah is under Mongol rule!" Siavush says "How do we even know this information is accurate? Are you to tell me that the word of a woman ought to be—" Paris says "Ought to be what? What does it profit us to doubt words intended to prevent our deaths, no matter what gender mouth they came out of?" Dara says "He's right. We should hold this warning true until it shows itself to be false." Firuz says "Siavush, is there any way to test the warning?" Siavush says "We can descend into an underground tunnel through the cave west of here. The entrance to the cave lies outside the city's line of sight."

A bell outside is being rung. Paris opens the door (camera switches to hallway) and asks a man running by "What's happening?" The man says "Prisontown soldiers are coming! They look like they have a full army!" The man runs off and Paris shuts the door (camera switches back). Mehrdad says "They must have discovered that we're not really in Tehran. Now they're coming in full force to take me back!" Dara says "If they think we're in Azarshah, then they'll try to invade. And that means—" Paris says "We'll see whether the Mongols really have conquered it." Firuz says "We need to get into the cave, and quickly!" Eskandar says "But how can we leave Town1 without being spotted?" Paris says "Disguises. I'll be right back." Paris leaves. Player regains control.

In hallway, Paris thinks "I've got to sneak up on Prisontown soldiers and take their uniforms." As Paris goes through hall, a voice from off-screen says "Final call! Assemble in the square! Everyone is to assemble in the square at once!" A few seconds later three soldiers come down the hall and start inspecting the rooms. If enough time elapses, one of the two soldiers stationed outside the hall will say "What's taking them so long? Go check it out." If enough time elapses, the one remaining on post will say "Well? What's going on? I'll go tell the captain." He begins to run toward the door. If he gets the captain, ten soldiers will run in immediately and sneaking will become extremely difficult. When seven uniforms are acquired, Paris goes back to the room. Fade out as they suit up. Fade in to show everyone wearing the uniforms. Walk outside. Rest of party rides off while Siavush runs up to PCaptain in the square. PCaptain says "What is the meaning of this? Where are they going?" Siavush says to PCaptain "Sir! [pants] With all due respect and reverence, I am afraid [pants] it has come to pass that I must regretfully inform you—" PCaptain says "Get on with it!" Siavush says "We have spotted a group of men [pants] fleeing toward Azarshah! We are pursuing them!" He runs to get his horse while PCaptain shouts "Make haste! Get Mehrdad before he reaches Azarshah!" 90% of the soldiers run off-screen. Go to overworld. Player makes Siavush ride to cave while Prisontown soldiers ride to Azarshah.

Inside cave party regroups and player takes control of Firuz. While walking, Siavush says "Right over there, by the rods." Party walks to three medium-length rods sitting on the ground. When player inspects it, view changes



to first-person. Puzzle #2 is seen. Siavush says “You have to push the rods in-between these pegs so that the rods isolate each peg in its own section.” Reset button is in the top-left corner of the screen. Firuz holds the first rod. The top halves of the other two rods are visible in the lower-right corner. D-Pad controls cursor. Player chooses where to put each end; side lights up when cursor hovers over it and stays illuminated until second side is chosen. When both sides are chosen, Firuz slides rod across. When all three rods are placed, it resets automatically if incorrect. If correct, prompt shows to mash a button. Firuz grabs the circle and turns it. When it turns all the way, the rods slip out and fall on the ground, and a panel in the cave wall opens. View changes to third person and party walks into opening. Door closes behind them.

### **Part 3**

Party walks through a passage. Dara says “Wait.” Everyone stops. Dara says “What should we do about Mehrdad? If the people see you, they will become angry.” Firuz says “He’s right. They might try to hurt you. We should cover your face.” Mehrdad says “No. I can’t just hide.” Siavush says “That’s correct. Eventually you will have to face justice, so there’s no sense hiding now.” Paris says “That’s just cold.” Siavush says “Fitting for a salamander, no? Let’s go.” Party walks through dim-lit tunnel where citizens of Azarshah are taking up temporary residence. Dara’s and Siavush’s parents are here, and they can be talked to. Paris, Eskandar, and Mikhail split off. Party is now Firuz, Dara, Mehrdad, and Siavush.

Party goes to battle HQ towards end of tunnel and talks to AColonel. AColonel says “Salamander! You have returned! But why are you dressed in those uniforms?” Siavush says “There are more pressing matters. How have the Mongols taken Azarshah?” AColonel says “Well... when we saw them coming, we... retreated.” Siavush says “[sigh] You are relieved of duty.” AColonel says “I stand relieved—” and Firuz simultaneously says “As you were, colonel.” Siavush looks at Firuz and says “Firuz?” Firuz says “I’ll handle this, Siavush. Go check your inventory, and whatnot.” Siavush says “Yes, sir.” and walks off-screen. Firuz says “Why did you not stand and fight?” AColonel says “How could we stand against the most fearsome army ever assembled? We felt overwhelmed, your majesty.” Firuz says “Just call me... whatever. Look, that’s exactly how the Mongols want you to feel. They depend on it.” Dara says “Without manipulation they would not be as formidable.” Firuz says “AColonel, I need to know that I can depend on you. We’re coming to a critical juncture, and we can’t afford a colonel who is going to surrender because he thinks the challenge is too big. Will you let me down again?” AColonel says “No, Firuz. Sir. King.” Firuz says “Good. Mehrdad, this is where I need you. What feature of the city’s defenses will help us here?” Mehrdad says “There’s a network of narrow passages going through the walls that can be accessed from here.” Firuz says Great.” He turns around. “Siavush!” The other four party members come onscreen. Firuz says “Mehrdad mentioned passages in the walls.” Siavush says “You mean the beehive.” Firuz says “I guess so. We’ll need you to use that.” Siavush says “Understood.” He turns around and says “Men! Prepare to enter the beehive!” Firuz says “How can we sneak into the city?” Siavush says “Over here.”

Camera switches to heavy iron door with crane next to it. Party walks on screen. Dara says “Firuz, you can’t be serious about confronting him! That’s suicide!” Firuz says “This is the best time, Dara. The Mongols are busy fighting off Prisontown. We must strike now.” Two soldiers come onscreen and mount the crane controls. Siavush says “This puzzle will unlock the door.” Mikhail says “Another puzzle?” Siavush says “The longer it takes for an invader to open this door, the more likely we are to stop them. What better way than this to slow them?” Save point is located nearby. When party approaches crane, camera switches to overhead view of square hole in cave floor, extending down about twenty feet with a grid at the bottom, holding large stones. Siavush says “The stones must be rearranged so that those two squares (illuminated) are not covered. The crane has controls to rotate or flip each stone.” Player must solve Puzzle #3. When stones are put in place, the tumblers slide through the holes in the stones and click in place. Camera switches to previous view. Soldiers are waiting by the door and go through. Party goes through doors to see another room with ladders along wall. When party gets to ladder, Firuz says “Here we go. The Mongols are busy fighting off the Prisontown soldiers, who I’m guessing are very surprised right now, so we have the element of surprise. Any thoughts?” Dara says “Good job.” Firuz says “Huh?” Dara says “The way you spoke to AColonel, and Siavush. You’re a true leader.” Firuz

says “Oh, come on.” Dara says “No, really. You’ve come a long way from that nervous ex-commander I knew.” The others agree. Firuz says “...Thanks, guys. Let’s go.” He takes off his Prisontown uniform and the others follow suit. He climbs up the ladder and the others follow.

Camera shows room with panel popping off floor. Party climbs up into dark, empty room one by one. Light from below shines faintly into room. Party stands around while player controls Firuz, who can talk to them. Firuz walks up to door and unlocks it. Party walks out. Must sneak or fight way to palace. Just before ascending the steps to the second-floor entrance, they are ambushed. Qaragan comes out with aides and small troop. Qaragan says “Tell me, Firuz, did you intend to destroy me with a troop of six men?” Dara says “Rostam did not fear when he was outnumbered a million to one.” Qaragan says “Rostam? Ah yes, your legendary Persian hero. Well, this is hardly a *pari* tale, gentlemen; you have reason to fear, for you are facing the Mongols.” Mehrdad says “What weapon do you have besides manipulation?” Qaragan says “Ah, Mehrdad, the deposed despot of Azarshah. You know, Khülegü spoke fondly of you. And now you betray him by joining the country you betrayed to join him. How delightful! In the end, you have returned to your brother, one and the same.” Mehrdad says “No! Firuz and I are not the same. He would never resort to acts of terrorism!” Firuz says “Nor will I tolerate yours, Qaragan. For too long we have suffered and we have feared for life and limb, while the Great Khan, whoever he may be, tramples us—” Starting at ‘have suffered’ Qaragan starts saying “Blah blah blah, fear, terror, blah blah. Yes, yes! Spare me your melancholy monologue.” Mehrdad says “Leave this place, you scum!” Qaragan says “Challenge accepted!” Dara says “What? Are you... what?” Qaragan says “If you best me, I shall go in peace. If I win, oh won’t that be calamitous! I’ll have your corpse and your country, Kublai Khan be condemned.” Firuz and Dara look at each other, then Firuz says “I and my company shall return.” They turn around and walk away while Qaragan says “Yes! Recess, then return from the retched room from which you, uh... returned to.” He takes a swig from his flask. An aide says “Terrific alliteration, sir.” Qaragan says “Shut up!” and throws his flask at the aide.

The party returns to the room with the ladder. As soon as the door is closed, Dara says “It’s a trick! Why would he agree to leave?” Eskandar says “Yeah! He wants this place and he wants you dead!” Mikhail says “We all know deception is their biggest weapon. Georgia knows as well as anyone.” Paris says “And if he’s actively disobeying Kublai Khan, how could we think he’d keep his word here?” Firuz says “Let’s go.” The others are shocked. Dara says “How can you say that?” Firuz says “How else can we make them leave? All-out conflict, which we must avoid.” Mehrdad says “They would be divided between us and Prisontown.” Firuz says “Don’t you see? Qaragan is testing my mettle. Obviously he doesn’t expect me to accept. But if I fight him one-on-one in front of thousands of Mongol soldiers, what will that say of my character?” Paris says “So you will face him for sure.” Firuz says “Will you have my back?” Paris says “To the very end.” The others agree. Firuz says “Then, as I said before, let’s go.” Player gains control of Firuz and can once again talk to other party members. Dara says ““If you see the teeth of the lion, do not think that the lion is smiling at you.” - Al-Mutanabbi. Be careful, Firuz.” Firuz exits door and others follow. Party walks to square in front of palace.

Qaragan turns around and says “You have come back?” Firuz says “Was that not your offer? I want you to leave.” Eskandar says “Why do you want this city, anyway?” Qaragan says “Is it not apparent? Azarshah would be an invaluable investment if the Golden Horde engages the Ilkhanate in a direct encounter. Civil war is inevitable, and Azarshah will assist my interests in Persia indefinitely.” Eskandar says “They’re getting worse. Poetry is not for you.” Qaragan says “I’ll ignore that insipid insult, you insolent infantryman.” Mikhail asks “What’s wrong with this guy?” Mehrdad says “I’m getting tired of telling you to leave, Qaragan! Let’s get this over with!” Qaragan says “How can you be so brave, when you are surrounded by a Tumen of Mongolia’s finest, trapped within the very walls you built?” Paris says “You’ve got it wrong, Qaragan. We’re not trapped here with you; you’re trapped here with us. If you want revenge against Firuz for distressing your brother Khülegü, you’re not going to find it here.”

Qaragan rides his horse over to the steps to the palace. Mehrdad says “What do you think you’re doing?” Qaragan says “I’ll wait over here. I won’t waste my time fighting someone who turns out to be a disappointment. Get through my guards to prove your worth.” One of the guards dismounts. Prompt asks player

to choose fighting order, i.e. which character goes first (if that character is K.O.'d then the next one will take his place). If Mikhail is in the party, he will assist each member with shielding and healing. Save prompt directly follows.

Player must confront three guards (one by himself, then two at once), then they walk over to Qaragan while he dismounts his horse. Qaragan says "How do you persist? When nearly everything you love has been destroyed, and your precious city-state has been conquered? Facing impossible odds, and for what?" Firuz says "For my right to live. The pen is mightier than the sword. Even if I die here, what I am fighting for will not die with me. If the world sees that I cared enough about my home to defend—" Qaragan says "I don't really care. I was just asking to discourage you." He draws his sword. He continues "Truth is, the only thing I care about is you causing my brother seven years of hardship. He died knowing that his greatest adversary was not brought down. But that's what I'm for, eh? And the eternal blue sky has blessed me, for I am the one who shall carry out Khülegü's final wish. Have at thee!" Qaragan quickly thrusts and player must be ready to dodge it.

Battle against Qaragan can either be shorter than a minute, or longer than ten, depending on how player fights. At the end of the fight, cutscene plays. Firuz knocks Qaragan's sword out of his hand and Qaragan falls backward. Firuz holds the point of his sword a few inches away from Qaragan's face. Qaragan says "What are you waiting for? Ferocity is in your blood!" Firuz lowers his sword and says "No. You have something to learn of prejudice. I am not like the man my brother used to be. I would be lucky to consider myself like my blood brother Dara." Firuz sheathes his sword and says "I suggest you go back to Qaraqorum and sort out your own problems before interfering in others' lives."

### **Good Ending**

Firuz continues "Now leave us in peace." Qaragan says "And if I refuse?" Mehrdad says "Your funeral. Siavush! Now!" Camera cuts to shot of wall. A fist punches through the wall and when it retracts, the head of an arrow sticks out. Hundreds of other fists punch out along the wall and arrows all around point to the square. Plaster falls from the holes. Cut back to square where Qaragan looks around. Firuz says "Whoa! I wasn't expecting that!" Qaragan says "Perhaps your advice is sound. I think I'll return. But don't think this is the end." Firuz says "Nothing ever ends. The end of one story is just the beginning of another." Qaragan says "Whatever." as he mounts his horse. He turns around and says "Prepare to depart. Boyan! How did the battle against Prisontown go?" The boyan says "Every last one slaughtered. It didn't take long; they retreated as soon as they saw who we were." Qaragan says "Good, then we can leave." Nergüi dismounts her horse. Qaragan says "Nergüi, what are you doing?" Nergüi says "I quit." and walks to Firuz. She continues "I'm putting an end to seven years of unrequited love. The rest of you can leave without me." Qaragan takes out his sword as he says "I'll kill you!" Paris steps forward and aims a Chinese rocket at Qaragan and says "I'd recommend against that." Qaragan pauses, re-sheathes his sword, and says "Have it your way." He turns around and says "Get out of here!" They move off-screen while Firuz asks Nergüi "How long..." Nergüi says "Since I first saw you in Town4. Firuz, will you be my husband?" Azarshahan civilians pour onto the screen in celebration. Firuz says "Yes." Music swells and camera pulls back to show square from distance and civilians dancing in the streets. Cut to next scene.

Festive music is playing. Camera is obscured by a vase. Within a second of the scene starting, the vase is picked up. In the half-second before the camera changes, player sees a table with a large bouquet in the center, surrounded by plates of finger foods. Two guests are standing by the table, eating. Camera switches to Mehrdad who is pouring juice from the vase into a glass held by Eskandar. Eskandar takes a sip and says "This is good juice. I wonder who made it." Mehrdad shouts "I did! I—" he looks around and says "I'm sorry. My temper isn't under control yet." Eskandar says "I forgive you. Try counting to three before you respond; maybe you'll be calm then." Parisa comes onscreen with her hair up and says "There you are!" Eskandar says "Hi, Parisa. Um, your hair." Parisa's eyes look up and she says "Oh, right." She lets it down as she says "Force of habit." Mehrdad says "Would you like some grape juice, Parisa?" Parisa says "Please." Mehrdad pours her juice and says "I miss the old you. I enjoyed not being the only high-pitched man around here." Parisa takes a sip while Mehrdad is speaking, then laughs and says "Well, I'm afraid you'll have to manage. I'm not a cutthroat traveler

anymore; now that I'm not concerned for my safety, I don't need to dress like a man." Eskandar says "Good, cause I was tired of you rubbing cinnamon on your face to look stubbly." Parisa looks shocked and says "You know about that?" Eskandar laughs and says "We all do!" Voice bubble from off-screen says "Friends," and the music stops as the camera shifts to the right until player sees the source of the bubble, Dara. He is up on a short, small stage with steps in front while Firuz and Nergüi stand behind him. Dara continues "Thank you all for coming here tonight to share this special moment, the Patakhti of our king Firuz and our new queen, Nergüi. May their marriage be long and joyous." Parisa and Eskandar walk onscreen and stand to watch Dara, who continues "And now, let us yield the floor to Mr. and Mrs. Azarnejad for their first dance as husband and wife." Dara steps off the stage and joins the crowd, which clears away from the center of the floor. Firuz and Nergüi walk down hand in hand while soft music starts. They begin dancing slowly. After ten seconds, Dara jumps out of the crowd and says "Let's boogie!" The crowd once again fills up the square dancing while faster, louder music plays. Parisa says "Wow, look at General Siavush! I would have never guessed that he was an enthusiastic dancer!" Dara says "You should have seen him do the knife dance!" Parisa looks shocked for a split second, then laughs and says "Salamander did the knife dance?" Dara says "Yeah, it was beautiful!" Parisa says "I'm sorry I missed it!" Camera cuts to profile view of Firuz and Nergüi dancing. Nergüi says "My love, I hate to take away from the happiness of tonight, but before this night is through, I must talk to you about Qaragan." Firuz says "Of course, my love." Nergüi says "Soon he will reach the palace at Qaraqorum."

Camera changes to shot of sunrise in Qaraqorum. A troop of Mongols rides past. Camera cuts to throne room, where Kublai Khan says "This I did not expect from you, brother! After the support I have shown you, the help I have given you, you disobey this one command? I promised our brother Khülegü on his grave that I would smite his enemy! Why, Qaragan, would you not do this one thing for me?" Qaragan says "I told you, the walls were filled with archers. I couldn't kill Firuz, lest I and my army be slaughtered!" Kublai says "It would have been better that you died than to disgrace us! Bring in Abaqa!" Qaragan says "Are you replacing me?" Kublai says "Yes, and your name shall be stricken from every book. You are hereby erased from the annals of history." Abaqa comes and kneels before Kublai. Kublai says "Abaqa, you are now Abaqa Khan, leader of the Ilkhanate. Now go, and destroy Azarshah."

Cut to sunrise. Cut to wall. Firuz is standing atop the city wall, looking at the sunrise. Dara walks up to him. Firuz says "Good morning." Dara says "Good morning. Shouldn't you and Nergüi be on your honey month?" Firuz says "We'll be leaving for Hamadan tomorrow morning." Dara says "Firuz?" Firuz stares ahead for a second, then turns to Dara and says "Yes?" Dara says "Come on, Firuz. What's on your mind?" Firuz says "...Azarshah is not long for the world. When I return, this place will be leveled." Dara says "How could you possibly say that? This is your home! This is my home! We fought to protect it, and now that you've finally regained it you want to leave?" Firuz says "Look around, Dara. I don't even recognize this place. It's become nothing more than a tool of war." Dara says "But it's our home, nonetheless!" Firuz says "Home is where your heart is, Dara. Take Parisa for example. She spent her whole life searching, not for a place, but for her family. Now her home is here only because her loved ones are here." Dara says "But we can return it to the way it used to be! What reason is there to destroy it?" Firuz says "Azarshah has made many enemies, including the Mongol Empire." Dara says "So we're going to—" Firuz says "We can either stave off Khan's sieges until the end of time, or we can dismantle Azarshah ourselves and deny them its protection." Dara says "So where will we go?" Firuz says "Wherever we want. Other than Spain and Mongolia, of course." Dara says "So that's it, then. A tiny state in western Persia will fall off the face of the Earth. No one will sing songs of us. No one will write down our history. No one will know of the things we have done." Firuz says "It doesn't have to be that way. When the shifting sands block one passage, another is opened." Dara says "Everyday, a new beginning." Firuz says "And you know, even when we begin anew, we don't have to start from nothing. We can take the lessons of the past and apply them to the present."

Camera cuts, when Firuz says "apply," to a workshop. Pan down gently to see an older-looking Eskandar working on a box-like device. A little girl comes in and says "Daddy, I can't sleep." Eskandar says "Well, you're in luck. I'm just about done with this." He makes a couple of adjustments as the girl asks "What is it?" Eskandar says "You'll see, or rather, hear." He closes it, cranks a key, and music starts as the credits roll. After

the music box music is over, new music starts as each of the characters is given a quick segment in between credits. Music and credits end. THE END shows on screen. A save option shows on screen after a few seconds. When finished game is loaded, party can travel around world (including Azarshah) and complete new sidequests.

### **Middle Ending**

Firuz walks to the palace steps. As he's stepping onto the first stair Qaragan runs forward as Nergüi shouts "Firuz, behind you!" and chops off his right arm as Nergüi shouts "No!" Paris fires a rocket at Qaragan, which hits him square in the chest. Qaragan flies backwards and into a wall where he explodes. Nergüi dismounts her horse and runs to Firuz while the other party members do the same. Camera cuts to the interior of the city walls. A fist comes through the plaster. When it retracts, an arrow flies out. Hundreds of other fists punch through the wall and soon thousands of arrows are flying out. Camera switches to square as arrows shower down on retreating Mongols. Switch to side of stairs where the party members are hiding. Nergüi is cradling Firuz. Fade out.

Fade in. Firuz is lying on bed in infirmary. Mikhail is sitting next to him. Firuz wakes up and says "Where am I?" Mikhail says "In the infirmary." Firuz says "My arm hurts." and reaches over for it. Mikhail says "You have no right arm anymore. The pain you feel is from your arm's ghost." Eskandar walks in and says "He's awake?" Mikhail says "Yes, he just awoke." Eskandar says "That's great!" and runs out. Firuz sits up and asks "Where's my sword?" Mikhail says "Don't try to move; you've lost a lot of blood. Your sword is in your chambers." Firuz says "Do me a favor. Bury it." A speech bubble from off-screen says "Who do you think you are? Eskandar?" Firuz says "Dara!" as Dara walks onscreen and up to the bed. Dara says "Are you giving up again? You'll learn to use your left arm." Firuz says "It's not that. I don't want to kill anymore." Eskandar and Paris walk up to his bed from the same direction as Dara says "No one wants to, but it's one thing to kill out of wickedness, and another to kill when your own life is threatened." Paris says "Life goes on." Eskandar says "And as long as we have each other, we can never be without help." Mehrdad walks onscreen and says "And believe me, I need it." Firuz says "Thanks, you guys." Dara says "Now, isn't there something coming up that we have to get ready for? What was it? Oh, yeah!" Cut to next scene.

Festive music is playing. Camera is obscured by a vase. Within a second of the scene starting, the vase is picked up. In the half-second before the camera changes, player sees a table with a large bouquet in the center, surrounded by plates of finger foods. Two guests are standing by the table, eating. Camera switches to Mehrdad who is pouring juice from the vase into a glass held by Eskandar. Eskandar takes a sip and says "This is good juice. I wonder who made it." Mehrdad shouts "I did! I—" he looks around and says "I'm sorry. My temper isn't under control yet." Eskandar says "I forgive you. Try counting to three before you respond; maybe you'll be calm then." Parisa comes onscreen with her hair up and says "There you are!" Eskandar says "Hi, Parisa. Um, your hair." Parisa's eyes look up and she says "Oh, right." She lets it down as she says "Force of habit." Mehrdad says "Would you like some grape juice, Parisa?" Parisa says "Please." Mehrdad pours her juice and says "I miss the old you. I enjoyed not being the only high-pitched man around here." Parisa takes a sip while Mehrdad is speaking, then laughs and says "Well, I'm afraid you'll have to manage. I'm not a cutthroat traveler anymore; now that I'm not concerned for my safety, I don't need to dress like a man." Eskandar says "Good, cause I was tired of you rubbing cinnamon on your face to look stubbly." Parisa looks shocked and says "You know about that?" Eskandar laughs and says "We all do!" Voice bubble from off-screen says "Friends," and the music stops as the camera shifts to the right until player sees the source of the bubble, Dara. He is up on a short, small stage with steps in front while Firuz and Nergüi stand behind him. Dara continues "Thank you all for coming here tonight to share this special moment, the Patakhiti of our king Firuz and our new queen, Nergüi. May their marriage be long and joyous." Parisa and Eskandar walk onscreen and stand to watch Dara, who continues "And now, let us yield the floor to Mr. and Mrs. Azarnejad for their first dance as husband and wife." Dara steps off the stage and joins the crowd, which clears away from the center of the floor. Firuz and Nergüi walk down hand in hand while soft music starts. They begin dancing slowly. After ten seconds, Dara jumps out of the crowd and says "Let's boogie!" The crowd once again fills up the square dancing while faster, louder music plays. Parisa says "Wow, look at General Siavush! I would have never guessed that he was an

enthusiastic dancer!” Dara says “You should have seen him do the knife dance!” Parisa looks shocked for a split second, then laughs and says “Salamander did the knife dance?” Dara says “Yeah, it was beautiful!” Parisa says “I’m sorry I missed it!” Camera cuts to profile view of Firuz and Nergüi dancing. Nergüi says “My love, I hate to take away from the happiness of tonight, but before this night is through, I must talk to you about Khan.” Firuz says “Of course, my love.” Nergüi says “You know, Mongols are really sore losers.”

Cut to sunrise. Cut to wall. Firuz is standing atop the city wall, looking at the sunrise. Dara walks up to him. Firuz says “Good morning.” Dara says “Good morning. Shouldn’t you and Nergüi be on your honey month?” Firuz says “We’ll be leaving for Hamadan tomorrow morning.” Dara says “Firuz?” Firuz stares ahead for a second, then turns to Dara and says “Yes?” Dara says “Come on, Firuz. What’s on your mind?” Firuz says “...Azarshah is not long for the world. When I return, this place will be leveled.” Dara says “How could you possibly say that? This is your home! This is my home! We fought to protect it, and now that you’ve finally regained it you want to leave?” Firuz says “Look around, Dara. I don’t even recognize this place. It’s become nothing more than a tool of war.” Dara says “But it’s our home, nonetheless!” Firuz says “Home is where your heart is, Dara. Take Parisa for example. She spent her whole life searching, not for a place, but for her family. Now her home is here only because her loved ones are here.” Dara says “But we can return it to the way it used to be! What reason is there to destroy it?” Firuz says “Azarshah has made many enemies, including the Mongol Empire.” Dara says “So we’re going to—” Firuz says “We can either stave off Khan’s sieges until the end of time, or we can dismantle Azarshah ourselves and deny them its protection.” Dara says “So where will we go?” Firuz says “Wherever we want. Other than Spain and Mongolia, of course.” Dara says “So that’s it, then. A tiny state in western Persia will fall off the face of the Earth. No one will sing songs of us. No one will write down our history. No one will know of the things we have done.” Firuz says “It doesn’t have to be that way. When the shifting sands block one passage, another is opened.” Dara says “Everyday, a new beginning.” Firuz says “And you know, even when we begin anew, we don’t have to start from nothing. We can take the lessons of the past and apply them to the present.”

Camera cuts, when Firuz says “apply,” to a workshop. Pan down gently to see an older-looking Eskandar working on a box-like device. A little girl comes in and says “Daddy, I can’t sleep.” Eskandar says “Well, you’re in luck. I’m just about done with this.” He makes a couple of adjustments as the girl asks “What is it?” Eskandar says “You’ll see, or rather, hear.” He closes it, cranks a key, and music starts as the credits roll. After the music box music is over, new music starts as each of the characters is given a quick segment in between credits. Music and credits end. Black screen.

After a few seconds, the scene switches to Qaraqorum. Kublai Khan decrees that Qaragan is to be stricken from the history books. Kublai then crowns Abaqa the new Ilkhan. Kublai orders him to destroy Azarshah. “If Firuz runs for his life, hunt him down. If you have to follow him from Germany to Korea and back again, catch him, and kill him.” Abaqa says “It shall be done.” Black screen.

THE END shows on screen. A save option shows on screen after a few seconds. When finished game is loaded, party can travel around world (including Azarshah) and complete new sidequests.

### **Bad Ending**

Firuz walks to the palace steps. As he’s stepping onto the first stair Qaragan runs forward as Nergüi shouts “Firuz, behind you!” and cuts off Firuz’s head. Parisa fires a Chinese rocket into Qaragan, who goes flying into a wall and explodes. Thousands of arrows shower down upon the Mongols, half of which die and the other half of which take defensive positions and fire back. Camera cuts to two Mongols setting fire to houses. The camera cuts out to a far shot of Azarshah, smoke billowing out, and a few arrows flying over the walls. Narration reads “And thus the city of Azarshah was erased from the Earth, and took with it the leaders of the Ilkhanate. The world never learned of Firuz’s courage, of Dara’s indomitable spirit, or of Mehrdad’s journey to reclaim his humanity.” A sandstorm slowly obscures everything on the screen until it fades to black. “As it was in those days, and as it sometimes is now, the passage to this place was deftly buried by the shifting sands. But what was

opened? Will this just be another storybook destroyed, like those millions of books whose ink blackened the Tigris? Or does it not matter if someone reads about a man's courageous acts, so long as they happened? Perhaps it's just as well. Without the story of courage, or whatnot, our only option is to show our own courage, and not just read about it. So even when a story is lost, we can still learn from it. Go, and make your own story." Music box music starts as the credits roll. After that music is over, new music starts as each of the characters is given a quick segment in between credits. Music and credits end. THE END shows on screen.