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CAT. 28. SIYAWUSH'S TRIAL BY FIRE

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Iran, Shiraz; c. 1440

Queen Sudaba fell madly in love with her young stepson, noble Prince Siyawush, who did not return her feelings. The queen's love turned to anger and a thirst for revenge. She disheveled her clothing and hair and accused her stepson of rape, but Siyawush maintained his innocence.

Siyawush's father, King Kay Kaus, decided to put the matter to the test. If Siyawush was able to ride through an enormous mountain of burning wood, his father would believe in his innocence.

The miniature shows the young prince, who emerges unscathed from the trial by fire. On the left, from the walls of the castle, Sudaba and two handmaidens observe the hair-raising events.

