

## CHAPTER ONE QUESTIONS

- 1. What are the first things we learn about Gilgamesh, in the opening of the epic? What does this tell us about the themes we are likely to see in the poem?
- "a man who loved // and lost a friend to death" p. 11 – LOYAL, CAPABLE OF STRONG EMOTION
- "lacked the power" p. 11 - NOT OMNIPOTENT
- "king of Uruk" p. 15 - ROYAL, CIVILIZED (?)
- "a god and a man" p. 15 - DIVINE
  - juxtaposed with Enkidu, who "grew up among the animals" p 15 and "was an animal and man" p. 15; Enkidu is already portrayed as G.'s opposite/complement
  - how they became "human together" p. 15 -> clearly a story about a deep relationship
- "tyrant to his people" p. 15; "pushed his people half to death" p 16 - OPPRESSIVE
- "sleeping with brides // before the husbands were permitted." p. 15; "without explanation let the walls... decay" - UNFAIR

**OBJECTIVE: TO IDENTIFY THEMES AND MOTIFS IN THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH AND CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE.**

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- 2. Describe what Gilgamesh is like early in the text. How do the gods perceive him? His people?
  - his people "had grown tired of his contradictions" p. 16 - UNPOPULAR

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- 3. **Why is Enkidu created as a wild, uncivilized human being?** What does he lose when he becomes civilized, and what does he gain? Is the change desirable? Explain.
  - The alternating lines on page 15 juxtapose Enkidu and Gilgamesh thereby suggesting that Enkidu is Gilgamesh's inverted image. These lines portray as G.'s opposite/complement.
  - He is meant to reveal to Gilgamesh his own faults and to fill any voids. The poem suggests that Enkidu and Gilgamesh are meant to encounter one another through Gilgamesh's visions. (see below)

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- 3. Why is Enkidu created as a wild, uncivilized human being? **What does he lose when he becomes civilized, and what does he gain? Is the change desirable? Explain.**
  - When E. becomes civilized, his previous friends, the animals, abandon him; E. experiences a new "vast aloneness." (p. 18) In spite of this loss, he has also established a close relationship with the prostitute and has grown "used to her body." (p. 20) Such closeness to another human being now sets him apart from the animals and she points out as much on p 20. She teaches him to eat, drink, and dress like a civilized man. (p. 21). In spite of this civility, however, Enkidu manages to maintain a link to animals as a protector of sheep. (p. 21)

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