

# The epic of gilgamesh: gilgamesh and enkidu friendship theme essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

All through history, stories, poems, and songs have common themes. This fact played a significant role in explaining some aspects of societal life. One of these is friendship. No one in the world does not need a friend; therefore, it is a necessary aspect of life.

The role of friendship in the Epic of Gilgamesh is vital. The epic was appearing in a period of nearly a thousand years from about 2500 to 1500 B. C. Gilgamesh, who is two-thirds god and one-third man, is the oppressive fifth king of Uruk while Enkidu is the ruler of the animals. This essay unfolds the theme of friendship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu that develops in the course of the story.

As the story begins, King Gilgamesh of Uruk is depicted to be in mature manhood and superior to all other men in both beauty and strength. No one could match up with him in the ancient Mesopotamian society. The unsatisfied cravings of his demigod nature could not find a suitable mate for him in love or war. Besides, his unsatisfied daemonic energy made the people of Uruk be dissatisfied with his reign.

Because he lacked love and friendship, Gilgamesh turned to excess and indulgence, and he celebrated his victories with too much debauched partying, which annoyed the individuals in the city as well as the gods in the temples. Because of his oppressive rule, the people asked for help from the gods since they feared that someday Gilgamesh would ask for a more significant part of his divine heritage, challenge the gods and even rock the pillars of heaven if he was not controlled.

Therefore, to counter the threat, the gods devised a plan of creating Enkidu, who was the Gilgamesh's friend and his mirror image. They believed that the king would divert his dangerous energies toward that rival, thereby stop challenging heaven. The gods then made Enkidu from clay and left him in the wilderness to live and eat as the animals do.

In the wilderness, though he somehow established a friendship with the wild animals, his cravings for a mate were not adequately satisfied. Therefore, when a harlot from the city seduced him, he quickly agreed to leave and live in the great-civilized city of Uruk. When Enkidu goes there, he seems not to like Gilgamesh at first since the two engaged in a fight soon after they met.

However, Gilgamesh and Enkidu quickly started to like one another. How did they become friends? In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the theme of friendship appears when the two giants become very close and begin to rely on one another in conquering their enemies with ease. After that, the solidarity between the two of them helps in developing the plot of the story. All in all, it is a mixture of morality, pure adventure, and tragedy, as subsequent experiences are based on this newfound eternal comradeship.

The newly found comrades soon grow weak and become indolent with city life. Therefore, Gilgamesh suggests an exciting activity, which involves going to the forest to cut down trees to construct a memorable monument to the gods. However, since the terrifying demon called Humbaba is endowed with the responsibility of protecting the forest that is also prohibited to mortals, they have to kill him first.

At first, Enkidu disagrees with this proposal but gives in after persuasion from his friend. The importance of their friendship gave them the astounding courage and unwavering confidence to succeed in killing Humbaba. As the King of Uruk cleans himself, Ishtar offers to become his wife because his beauty was appealing to her; however, he turns her down with insults, recounting to her the dire fates that all her mortal lovers have met.

Ishtar, the goddess of love and beauty, is infuriated at the rejection and goes to heaven to request his father, Anu, to send the Bull of Heaven to terrorize the people of Uruk. However, Gilgamesh and his compatriot work together to defeat the bull sent by the gods from heaven.

For example, after the success of their missions, Enkidu dreamt that they had gone contrary to the wishes of the gods so much that one of them must be sacrificed for murdering Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven. Thereafter, he quickly succumbed to a fatal disease after twelve days of suffering.

The loss of Enkidu brings remorse to Gilgamesh, and he realizes that death is inevitable. Because of the loss of the great friendship, he sets out on a journey to find Utnapishtim, the one man holding the secret of everlasting life. On the way, he encountered various obstacles, and on finally meeting Utnapishtam, he successively failed different tests that could have given him the secret of immortality. In the end, Gilgamesh, though being the King of Uruk, succumbed to the same fate that befell his friend.

Although the type of friendship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu corresponds to contemporary friendship, it differs in some way from it. All through the

ages, humans have treasured friendship since it determines our survival in this world.

In the current society, human relationship is essential for helping one another in times of difficulty, just as Gilgamesh and Enkidu assisted one another in conquering their enemies. Most people look for various traits in friends, mainly attributes that they may have in common. However, the current society takes friendship for granted. Many people see it as something that exists naturally.

How many yearn for their better halves, as did Gilgamesh and Enkidu for each other? Who can go in the world to search for a suitable mate in love? What does the relationship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu tell us about friendship? The Mesopotamian society, as depicted by taming of Enkidu so that Gilgamesh could accept him, valued friendship such that they could go in search of it.

I do not think that two ordinary peasants in Mesopotamia were capable of forming the kind of bond that existed between Gilgamesh and Enkidu. For me, this is the most important thesis of the essay. Epic of Gilgamesh depicts its main hero as being a two-thirds god. Therefore, to make him have his equal, the gods created Enkidu to satisfy his cravings for a mate. That's why Gilgamesh and Enkidu needed each other. This fact implies that the gods predestined their friendship, a thing that could not just happen among ordinary peasants in Mesopotamia.

Before the coming of Enkidu, Gilgamesh had a cold heart, and he never befriended anyone. However, the arrival of Enkidu changed all these as he <https://assignbuster.com/the-epic-of-gilgamesh-gilgamesh-enkidu-friendship-theme-essay/>

placed a check on Gilgamesh's powerful energies. On the other hand, Gilgamesh pulled him out of his egocentricity. This even matching of characteristics is only possible when someone is specially created for the other, but not otherwise as may be in ordinary men.