

A lethal lust: emotion
and downfall in "the
man who would be
king"



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Beauty is easy to find within the basics of human nature, such as elemental love or the innocent playfulness of children, untouched by the world's nastier truths. However, primal instincts held within mankind are not always as elegant as one would hope, for lust, greed and the thirst for power are capable of driving one beyond their better judgement. These very emotions present themselves within Rudyard Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" and bring the downfall of Daniel as his lack of insight blinds him from an indisputable reality.

Though Daniel and his partner-in-crime Peachy successfully infiltrated the country of Kafiristan and built their statuses as gods, Daniel became lost in all of the glory. He, out of the two friends, became increasingly more enthusiastic to play out his role as the king. After a few months passed and he settled into his newfound position, he desired more than gold and glory; "The winter's coming and these people won't be giving much trouble, and if they do we can't move about. I want a wife" (Kipling 105). In his eyes, the only thing that would make him more godly was to have a family and to raise a heir to his throne. Within this idea alone, many potential problems are present. The task of raising a family doesn't just happen overnight, he would have to stay in the country for many years. In this time the people would watch him grow older, something that no god has to worry about. He is too busy in the now to think about these such things. Daniel is so entranced by this idea that he even shrugs off the warnings of quarrel within the people from Peachy, saying, "A row among my people! Not much, Peachy, you're a fool not to get a wife too" (Kipling 108). Dan, attempting to push the idea onto his friend, couldn't see how getting himself a queen would be of any

worry to his people. This merely represents the lack of knowledge the two had on the natives in the first place. Seeing that their entire presence in the country was improvised, they knew very little about the culture and societal norms within the country. They simply bit off more than they could chew.

Being simple cons, Peachy Carnehan and Daniel Davarot were already on the road to disaster when they intruded on a people they knew very little about. As Daniels reign grew larger, with his god-complex growing right alongside it, he got too comfortable in his position. When he requested a wife, the country's inhabitants became distraught. Peachy even received direct warning from Billy Fish, a priest who was loyal both to his people and the two gods; " I can't rightly say, but if you can make the king drop all this nonsense about marriage you'll be doing him and me and yourself a great service" (Kipling 107). Billy, knowing the rights and wrongs in the community, would have proved to be the needed insight for Daniel to continue his rule undisturbed. The priest even continued to caution that, " There are all sorts of Gods and Devils in these mountains, and now and again a girl marries one of them and isn't seen anymore" (Kipling 107). By this time, the reader easily sees the fear that a mortal-to-god marriage would evoke within the people of Kafiristan. Disregarding the warnings from friend and consultant, Daniel, blinded by his concupiscent urges, continues on with his plan.

The ceremony was held, and the King, who was very eager to find himself a prince-maker, happily ignored all signs of resentment in the crowd. Even watching the anxious girl walk up to him, Daniel ignored the clear hints of a problem; " Up comes the girl, and a strapping wench she was, covered with silver and turquoises, but white as death, and looking back every minute at <https://assignbuster.com/a-lethal-lust-emotion-and-downfall-in-the-man-who-would-be-king-2/>

the priests" (Kipling 108). As this sort of arrangement is unheard of in Kafiristan, the girl is terrified of her future, which to her did not look very promising. Dan would be aware of this if he listened to the warnings from the priest, but alas, he had chosen a different fate for himself. As the girl got smothered by the god, she did what any damsel would do when faced with life or death; "'The slut's bitten me!' says [Daniel], clapping his hand to his neck, and, sure enough, his hand was red with blood" (Kipling 108). Although it is bewildering that the two gods had managed not to bleed at all for several months whilst they led the country, in front of the a whole village is not the ideal place to be whilst proving one's own mortality. This easily avoidable circumstance brings about the climax of the story, which is followed by a well-justifiable beheading and crucifixion.

Daniel and Peachy may have successfully convinced a whole country that they were immortal, and managed to be very fruitful whilst doing so, but the addition of desire into the mix brought their progress to a screeching halt. Caught up in a whirlwind of domination and excitement, one's desires can easily blind them to all logic. Daniel's inability to resist his human urges proved to be quite a lethal lust indeed.