

The search for kim: rudyard kipling's kim



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* has many themes, but the most prevalent are the Game and the Search. The main characters, Kim and the Lama, are both involved in these two "topics". They keep switching back and forth between the Game and the Search. Though the purpose of the Lama is the Search for his river, he keeps being drawn back into the Game.

Kim's purpose is to be trained for and to play the Game, but in the first few chapters, he assists the Lama in his Search. And when Kim meets the Lama, he assists him in his Search. Even though these characters have their respective purpose that does not stop them from being in each other's purpose. As we have seen before, the bond between Kim and the Lama is quite fervent and they are perfectly in their environment when they assist each other.

As mentioned before, Kim's "activity" is the Game, but he occasionally finds himself in the Search. The Search for Kim is to help the Lama to find his river but also to find himself (Kim). We do not know much about Kim except that he was an orphan and that he was brought up in Lahore City. We know a bit about him; the fact that he has pride and is a bit mischievous at times.

But we do not know the rest. We only know about the tip of the iceberg, but not the other section hidden beneath the water. Kim struggles with that fact and the Search for him is also about the Search for identity. The first few words of Kim are his speculation about his identity. He is alone, but no one knows that he is alone. Only Kim knows that he is alone.

In order for others to find him, he must find himself. He asks himself, "If I die today, who shall bring the news?" (Kipling 202) Kim speculates about the fact

that no one will know whether he is dead or not. Other people say that they know Kim, but like the readers, they only know a part. Only Kim can truly know himself, but he is on that road to the Search where he can find his identity. The process by which Kim tries to find himself is evident of his Search.

“ A very few white people, but many Asiatics ... letting the mind go free upon speculation as to what is called personal identity” (Kipling 202). These words are evidence of what Kim is trying to accomplish. When he is not concentrated on the Game or helping the Lama with his Search, he tries to find his identity.

He asks himself, “ Who is Kim - Kim - Kim? ” (Kipling 202) He is confused but this is the time that he can truly know himself. The youth is the best time to learn because the brain is fertile and the seed of knowledge can be sown easily. Kim's search for his identity is at his climax during his youth, because it is at this time, he struggles to know himself. The power of knowledge is potent during youth but dissipates with age.

It is this power that Kim utilizes to find himself. It is at this particular time that this power has manifested and Kim uses it to search for his identity. It was mentioned previously that Kim is on the Search as well as the Game. But the reason that the Search has not completely ended is partly due to the River of the Arrow, but also that Kim cannot truly find his identity. When he set his mind to be free and to try and search for himself, he would be on the threshold of the solution but somehow it would slip away from him. It is this slip that further pushes the Search.

The Search will only be completed when both sides of the equation are satisfied. This is when the Lama finds his river and Kim finds himself. Kim says previously that in all India, there is no one as alone as him (Kipling 202). But that is false.

Kim encounters a holy man who is also on some of sort of search. This search is not so different from Kim's. The holy man has lost his way and the gates are locked. He needs to open the gates. These gates represent the fact that the holy man also struggles to search for his identity. But the difference between Kim and the holy man is that the holy man has some clue.

He says, " I know. Who should know but I? (Kipling 203) That relates to Kim, as no one else can know him as he can. The theme of this passage is the search for identity and Kim is confused about who he is. When the holy man asks him about his faith, he replies that only Allah know what he seeks (Kipling 203). This is another reference to Kim's confusion with his identity.

We know that he is Christian, but he portrays himself as a Muslim. Kim's encounter with the holy man shows that he is not as alone as he previously thought. " but thither do we all travel" (Kipling 203). Everyone is searching for their identity including Kim and the holy man. He thought that in the whole of India, there was no one as alone as him. That has been contradicted with his meeting the holy man.

The holy man is also on the Search, but his is concentrated on identity. Before parting, the holy man tells Kim that it is a long road to the feet of the One (Kipling 203). This journey is more evidence to Kim's Search. The Search

will only end if Kim finds himself. Even though Kim tries to find the solution, it seems to slip away from him.

The One will be the time when Kim will finally know the solution and himself. The book revolves around the concepts of the Game and the Search. For Kim, the Game is what he is being trained to do and someday he will play the game perfectly. The Search is what still lingers. Once Kim discovers his identity, he will achieve what he set out to do. He would have found himself and he will be able to play the Game successfully.

For the Lama, the Search is his chance to be free from the Wheel of Life. For Kim, the Search is his chance to be free from himself and his attachment to himself. Once he knows himself, he can turn away.