

Heros: comparing gilgamesh and enkidu



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A hero is a genuine soul. He or she is always willing to risk his or her life for the safety of another. He or she has a need for things to be right in the world, but evil will always return. A hero she also possesses some extraordinary power or gift that a normal human being does not. It is very interesting when Gilgamesh is compared with Enkidu. It is easy to tell at the beginning of the story that Enkidu is going to be a hero. It takes a little bit longer for the reader to warm up to the idea of Gilgamesh becoming a hero. Enkidu is more of a heroic character when we first meet him. He has unusual strength for a normal man, greater than that of dozens of wild animals. He also possesses the knowledge of many men. He fights many evils in his short stint at life. First, he fights Gilgamesh. Next, he has to destroy Humbaba, the demon of the forest. He performs heroic acts such as standing up for the virgins that Gilgamesh demands to sleep with before they sleep with their husbands. Enkidu has the heart of a hero. He does not have it in his soul to kill Humbaba. He even cries when Gilgamesh asks him to help with the kill. He is a loyal friend. He walks before Gilgamesh, taking the blame for killing Humbaba, cutting down the cedar forest, and then defeating the Bull of Heaven even though it was Gilgamesh who committed these acts. This was an amazing deed, because he faced imminent death for the saving of his friend. Gilgamesh is extremely selfish at the start of the tale. Even with his selfish deeds, the town's people think of him as their hero. Being two parts god but still one part human almost obligates him to be a hero. First, he demands to sleep with all of the new brides before their honeymoon. He also has to face great evils. He helps destroy Humbaba and then he kills the Bull of Heaven. His worst deed of all is dragging Enkidu down with him when he angers the gods. But when Enkidu dies for him, he has a change of heart. He

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mourns Enkidu and sets out on a treacherous journey for immortality in an attempt to bring Enkidu back. He has to walk thousands of miles in the dark through a mountain range. This truly proves that Gilgamesh is also a hero. They both have very many traits in common. They are both recognized as heroic figures by the townspeople. They fight the many evils together. They are both respected by the gods at the beginning of the story because Enkidu is created by the gods and Gilgamesh is part god. In many ways Enkidu and Gilgamesh are very different. They are both heroes by the end of the story but in two different ways. Enkidu is a hero to humanity and Gilgamesh is a hero to his friend. Enkidu gives his life for his friend. Gilgamesh makes things right with his journey. Heroes will always be heroes no matter your definition.