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## The Epic of Gilgamesh: An Ancient Tale of Heroism



The Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the oldest known works of literature, tells the story of a legendary hero named Gilgamesh, who ruled the city of Uruk in ancient Mesopotamia. Composed in cuneiform script on clay tablets around 2100 BCE, the epic predates many well-known ancient texts and offers valuable insights into the culture and beliefs of the time.

Gilgamesh, the central character, is described as a powerful and arrogant king who oppresses his people. In response to their suffering, the gods create Enkidu, a wild man who lives in harmony with nature. After a series of encounters, Enkidu and Gilgamesh become close friends and embark on heroic adventures together.

One of their most famous exploits is the slaying of the monster Humbaba and the killing of the Bull of Heaven, sent by the goddess Ishtar in revenge for Gilgamesh's rejection of her advances. These actions attract the attention of the gods, leading to tragic consequences for Enkidu, who is struck down by illness and death.

Devastated by the loss of his friend and confronted by the reality of mortality, Gilgamesh embarks on a quest for immortality. His journey takes him to the ends of the Earth, where he encounters figures such as Utnapishtim, the survivor of a great flood, and the mysterious Siduri. In the end, Gilgamesh returns to Uruk, wiser and humbler, accepting the inevitability of death.

The Epic of Gilgamesh explores themes of friendship, the human condition, the quest for immortality, and the limits of power, making it a timeless and universal work of literature.