

Gilgamesh: Tablet IV

At twenty leagues, they broke bread,
At thirty leagues, they pitched camp.

Fifty leagues they travelled in the course of a day,
By the third day, a march of a month and a half, nearer they drew to Mount Lebanon.

Facing the sun, they dug a well,
They put fresh water in their skins.

Gilgamesh climbed to the top of the mountain; upon the hill, he poured out an offering of flour, saying:

“O mountain bring me a dream,
Let me see a good sign!”

Enkidu made for Gilgamesh a House of the Dream God; he fixed a door in its doorway to keep out the weather.

In the circle he had drawn, he made Gilgamesh lie down,
Falling flat like a net, he lay himself in the doorway.

Gilgamesh rested his chin on his knees:

Sleep fell upon him,
Sleep that spills over people.

In the middle of the night he reached his sleep's end; he rose and spoke to his friend:

“My friend, did you not call me? Why have I wakened?
Did you not touch me? Why am I startled?

Did a god not pass by?
Why is my flesh frozen numb?

My friend, I have had a first dream; the dream that I had was an utter confusion:

In a mountain valley there dwelt a terror,
The mountain fell down on top of the horrible thing within; then we like
the sunrise rose in glory.”

The one born in the wild knew how to give counsel, Enkidu spoke to his friend, and gave his dream meaning:

“My friend your dream is a good omen,
The dream is precious and bodes us well.

My friend, the mountain you saw could not be Humbaba,
We shall capture Humbaba; him we shall slay.

We shall cast down his corpse on the field of battle,
And next morning we shall see a good sign from the Sun God.”

At twenty leagues they broke bread,
At thirty leagues they pitched camp.

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By the third day, a march of a month and a half, nearer they drew to Mount Lebanon.

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“My friend, did you not call me? Why have I wakened?
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Did a god not pass by?
Why is my flesh frozen numb?

My friend, I have had a second dream; my second dream surpasses the first:

In my dream, my friend, a mountain rose up to meet me,
It threw me down, it held me by my feet and shook me,

The brightness grew more intense; a man appeared,
He was the comeliest in the land, his beauty surpassing all.

From beneath the mountain he pulled me out and lifted me up,
He gave me water to drink and my heart grew calm; on the ground he set
my feet."

Enkidu spoke to him, saying to Gilgamesh:

- A "My friend, we shall see, this terror is different altogether,
- B Humbaba, the monster, is not the mountain.
- B He is different altogether than our monster,
- A Come, cast aside your fear; this terror is not yours."

At twenty leagues, they broke bread,
At thirty leagues, they pitched camp.

Fifty leagues they travelled in the course of a day,
By the third day, a march of a month and a half, nearer they drew to Mount Lebanon.

Facing the sun, they dug a well,
They put fresh water in their skins.

Gilgamesh climbed to the top of the mountain; upon the hill, he poured out an offering of flour, saying:

"O mountain bring me a dream,
Let me see a good sign!"

Enkidu made for Gilgamesh a House of the Dream God; he fixed a door in its doorway to keep out the weather.

In the circle he had drawn, he made Gilgamesh lie down,
Falling flat like a net, he lay himself in the doorway.

Gilgamesh rested his chin on his knees:

Sleep fell upon him,
Sleep that spills over people.

In the middle of the night he reached his sleep's end, he rose and spoke to his friend:

"My friend, did you not call me? Why have I wakened?
Did you not touch me? Why am I startled?

Did a god not pass by?
Why is my flesh frozen numb?

**My friend, I have had a third dream; the dream that I had was an utter
confusion:**

Heaven cried aloud, while earth did rumble,
The day grew still, darkness came forth.

There was a flash of lightening,
A fire broke out.

The flames flared up,
Death rained down.

Flames and the flashes of fire went out.
Where it had fallen turned into cinders.

You were born in the wild,
With your wisdom can we take counsel?"

Having heard the words of his friend, Enkidu gave the dream meaning, saying to Gilgamesh:

"My friend, your dream is a good omen,
Fine is its message.

We draw, my friend, ever nearer the forest,
The dreams are close, the battle soon.

You will see the Radiant Auras of the God,
Of Humbaba, whom in your thoughts you fear so much.

Locking horns like a bull you will batter him,
You will force his head down with your strength.

The old man you saw is your powerful god,
The one who begot you, Divine Lugalbanda.”

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At thirty leagues, they pitched camp.

Fifty leagues they travelled in the course of a day,
By the third day, a march of a month and a half, nearer they drew to Mount Lebanon.

Facing the sun, they dug a well,
They put fresh water in their skins.

Gilgamesh climbed to the top of the mountain; upon the hill, he poured out an offering of flour, saying:

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In the circle he had drawn, he made Gilgamesh lie down,
Falling flat like a net, he lay himself in the doorway.

Gilgamesh rested his chin on his knees:

Sleep fell upon him,
Sleep that spills over people.

In the middle of the night he reached his sleep’s end, he rose and spoke to his friend:

“My friend, did you not call me? Why have I wakened?
Did you not touch me? Why am I startled?

Did a god not pass by?
Why is my flesh frozen numb?

My friend, I have had a fourth dream; it surpasses my other three dreams:

"I saw a large bird, its visage distorted,
Its mouth was fire, its breath was death.

There was also a man; he was strange of form,
He was mighty and stood there in my dream.

He bound the bird's wings and took hold of my arm,
He held me in place and he cast the bird down before me."

The one born in the wild knew how to give counsel, Enkidu spoke to his friend, and gave his dream meaning:

"You saw a Thunderbird in the sky,
Up it rose like a cloud, souring above us.

It was a raging bird, its visage distorted,
Its mouth was fire; its breath was death.

You will fear its awesome splendour,
I shall hold its foot and let you arise!"

The man you saw was mighty Shamash,
The god from whom you seek a blessing; Divine Being.

My friend, favorable is your dream,
Fine is this night's work; all is in your favor.

Humbaba, like a great bird will try to fly,
Fire will be kindled as he rises; fire will light upon him.

We shall bring about his end,
We shall bind his wings.

We shall bring about his end together,
We shall stand upon him.

The next morning we shall see a good sign,
The next day we shall have manifestations of light from the Sun God.

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At thirty leagues, they pitched camp.

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Sleep fell upon him,
Sleep that spills over people.

In the middle of the night he reached his sleep’s end, he rose and spoke to his friend:

“My friend, did you not call me? Why have I wakened?
Did you not touch me? Why am I startled?

Did a god not pass by?
Why is my flesh frozen numb?

**My friend, I have had a fifth dream how ominous it was, how desolate,
how unclear:**

I had taken me hold of a bull from the wild:

As the bull clove the ground with its bellows,
The clouds of dust it raised thrust deep in the sky.

I was in front of it,
I leaned myself forward.

Taking hold of me another enclosed my arms.
He extricated me from the bull by force of his strength.

My cheek he kissed; my brow he wiped,
He gave me water to drink from his waterskin.”

Having heard the words of his friend, Enkidu gave the dream meaning, saying to Gilgamesh:

“The god, my friend, we are going against, was your god who respects you,
This god is the Divine Lugalbanda.

We shall join forces and do something unique,
We shall do a feat that never has been in the land!”

**The dreams and prophecies having ended, the heroes approached the Forest of Cedar.
Enkidu offered courage to the King:**

“Why, my friend, do your tears flow:

“O, Offshoot Sprung from Uruk’s Midst, you now stand in the shadow of
your oath,
Gilgamesh the King, Offshoot Sprung from Uruk’s Midst, you now lay eyes
on your journey’s end.”

Shamash heard what Enkidu had spoken, straight away from the sky there cried out a voice:

“Hurry, stand against him!
Humbaba must not enter his forest.

He must not go down to the grove,
He must not find his way through the wood.

He must not wrap himself in the Seven Cloaks of Power,
One he is wrapped in, six he has shed.”

**Hearing the will of Shamash, Gilgamesh readied himself for attack,
Hearing the voice of Humbaba from afar, Enkidu halted:**

- A He bellowed once; a bellow full of terror,
- B The Guardian of the Forest bellowed throughout the land.
- B The God of the Forest, was a deluge,
- A He thundered like the God of the Storm.

They renewed their quarrel; the heroes,
Like a fierce wild bull and his enemy; horns locked.

Enkidu opened his mouth to speak, saying to Gilgamesh:

“Why do you desire this thing; an ambush of Humbaba?
Why do you desire an unwinnable battle?

My friend, how can we go into the home of Humbaba?
How can he be disturbed; the Guardian of the Cedars?

Enlil made it his lot to terrify men,
He who guards the forest, his reach is wide.

Through sobbing my legs do tremble,
Terror has entered my heart.

My strength ebbs away,
My arms grow stiff!”

Gilgamesh opened his mouth to speak, saying to Enkidu:

- A “Why, my friend, do we speak like weaklings?
- B Was it not we crossed all of the mountains?
- B Did not we endure the journey behind us?
- A Why speak of trembling, let us think of our oaths?
- A My friend, experienced in combat,
- B You, amidst the battle, shall keep safe your companion.
- C You will go in front and fear not the work,
 - D You shall spin like a dervish, and use **your** voice in terror.
 - D Let **your** shout resound like a kettle drum,
- C Let the stiffness leave your arms; the tremors your knees!
- B Take my hand, friend, and we shall go on together,
- A Let your thoughts dwell on combat!

Forget death and seek life!
Forget a life of ease; forget the careful man!

Let he who goes first be on guard for himself **and** bring his comrade to
safety!

It is **they** who will make a name for days long in the future!”

At the distant gate the two of them arrived,
They ceased their talking and came to a halt.