



# Gilgamesh

*Stephen Mitchell*

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## **Gilgamesh** Stephen Mitchell

Gilgamesh: a wild bull of a man, tall beyond all others, violent, splendid, power made flesh, supreme among mortals, a born leader of men Gilgamesh is a born leader, but in an attempt to control his growing arrogance, the Gods create Enkidu, a wild man, his equal in strength and courage. Enkidu is trapped by a temple prostitute, civilised through sexual experience and brought to Gilgamesh. They become best friends and battle evil together. After Enkidu's death the distraught Gilgamesh sets out on a journey to find Utnapishtim, the survivor of the Great Flood, who has been made immortal by the Gods to ask him the secret of life and death. Gilgamesh is the first and remains one of the most important works of world literature. Written in ancient Mesopotamia in the third millennium B.C., it predates the Iliad by roughly 1,500 years. Gilgamesh is extraordinarily modern in its emotional power but it also provides an insight into the values of an ancient culture and civilisation. Dramatic and highly charged, Mitchell's lively interpretation opens up this famous epic poem for the contemporary reader.

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