

**The King Buries His Seer In The Cave, and Continuing  
His Journey, He Meets Two Fiery Giants Who  
Guide The Sun in the Heavens—They Make Merry  
Over The King, and Direct Him on His Way**

*From The Epic of Ishtar and Izdubar*

By Unknown

The King within the cave his seer entombs,  
And mourning sadly from the cavern comes;  
The entrance close with the rocks around,  
Again upon his journey he is bound.  
But soon within the mountains he is lost  
Within the darkness,—as some vessel tost  
Upon the trackless waves of unknown seas,  
But further from the awful cavern flees.  
The morning breaks o'er crags and lonely glens,  
And he dismayed, the awful wild now scans.  
He reins his steed and wondering looks around,  
And sees of every side a mystic ground.  
Before him stands the peak of Mount Masu,  
The cliffs and crags forlorn his eyes swift view,  
And cedars, pines, among the rocks amassed,  
That weirdly rise within the mountain fast.  
Hark! hear that dreadful roaring all around!  
What nameless horror thrills the shaking ground?

The King in terror stares! and see! his steed  
Springs back! wild snorting,—trembling in his dread.  
Behold! behold those forms there blazing bright!  
Fierce flying by the earth with lurid light;  
Two awful spirits, demons, or fierce gods,  
With roaring thunders spring from their abodes!  
From depths beneath the earth the monsters fly,  
And upward lift their awful bodies high,  
Yet higher!—higher! till their crests are crowned  
By Heaven's gates; thus reaching from the ground  
To heights empyrean, while downward falls  
Each form, extending far 'neath Hades' walls.  
And see! each god as molten metal gleams,  
While sulphurous flame from hell each monster climbs!  
Two fiery horrors reaching to the skies,  
While wrathful lightning from each monster flies!  
Hell's gate they guard with Death's remorseless face,

And hurl the sun around the realms of space  
E'en swifter than the lightning, while it goes  
Along its orbit, guided by their blows.  
Dire tempests rise above from their dread blows,  
And ever round a starry whirlwind glows;  
The countless stars thus driven whirl around,  
With all the circling planets circling round.

The King astounded lifts his staring eyes,  
Into his face gray fear, with terror flies;  
As they approach, his thoughts the King collects,  
Thus over him one of the gods reflects.  
"Who cometh yonder with the form of gods?"  
The second says: "He comes from man's abodes,  
But with a mortal's feebleness he walks;  
Behold upon the ground alone he stalks."

One lifts his mighty arm across the sky,  
And strikes the sun as it goes roaring by;  
The fiery world with whiter heat now glows,  
While a vast flood of flame behind it flows,  
That curling, forms bright comets, meteors,

And planets multiplies, and blazing stars;  
The robe of flames spreads vast across the sky,  
Adorned with starry gems that sparkling fly  
Upon the ambient ether forming suns  
That through new orbits sing their orisons;  
Their pealing thunders rend the trembling sky,  
The endless anthem of eternity.

The monster turning to the King then says,  
When nearer now his awful form doth blaze:  
"So thus you see, my son, the gods are strong,  
And to provoke great power, is foolish, wrong;  
But whither goest thou, thou sad-eyed King,  
What message hast thou;—to us here would

The King now prostrate to the monsters prayed:  
"Ye gods or demons, I within your glade  
Of horrors, have unwilling come to seek  
Our Khasisadra, who a spell can make  
To turn the anger of the gods away.  
Immortal lives the seer beside the sea,  
He knoweth death and life, all secret things;  
And this alone your servant to you brings.

The goddess sought my hand, which I denied,  
And Anu's fury thus I have defied;  
This all my troubles caused, show me the way  
To Khasisadra, this I ask and pray."

The god's vast face broke out with wondrous smiles,  
And laughing, ripples rolled along for miles;  
His mouth wide opened its abyss and yawned,  
As earthquake gulf, far spreading through the ground.  
His roaring laughter shakes the earth around,  
"Ho! ho! my son! so you at last have found  
The Queen can hate, as well as love her friends,  
And on thy journey Ishtar's love thee sends?  
A mortal wise thou wast, to her refuse,  
For she can do with man what she may choose.  
A mortal's love, in truth, is wondrous strong,  
A glorious thing it is, Life's ceaseless song!

Within a cave upon the mountain side,  
Thou there thy footsteps must to Hades guide,  
Twelve *kas-pu* go to yonder mountain gates,  
A heart like thine may well defy the fates.  
A darkness deep profound doth ever spread  
Within those regions black,—Home of the Dead.  
Go, Izdubar! within this land of Mas,  
Thy road doth lead, and to the west doth pass,  
And may the maidens sitting by the walls  
Refresh thee, lead thee to the Happy Halls."  
The path they take behind the rising sun  
The setting sun they pass,—with wings have flown  
The scorpion men, within wide space have gone,  
Thus from his sight the monsters far have flown.