

The Descent of Inanna

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – ALL ANSWERS IN COMPLETE SENTENCES

1. When was The Descent of Inanna finally recorded on clay tablets?
2. Sumer is now located in which country?
3. Who conquered Sumer and turned it into part of Babylonia?
4. According to this Sumerian culture, who was the Queen of Heaven and Earth?
5. Who was the Queen of the Great Below?
6. Why do you suppose Inanna wants to journey to the Underworld?
7. Who is Inanna's servant?
8. What does Inanna want her servant to do to herself if she does not come back in three days?
9. Inanna tells her servant that if she does not come back in three days to seek the help of three gods. Who are those gods?
10. Which of those three gods has been to the underworld before?
11. Who is the gatekeeper (doorman) of the underworld?

12. What reason does Inanna give the doorman for visiting the underworld?
13. Is that the true reason or a lie?
14. Who is Ereshkigal's husband?
15. What does Inanna have to do if she wants to enter the underworld?
16. What happened to Inanna when she finally reached her sister's throne?
17. Which god did Inanna's servant seek help from first?
18. Does he help her?
19. Which god did Inanna's servant seek help from next?
20. Which god did Inanna's servant seek help from last?
21. What did Enki create with the dirt from under his fingernail?
22. What did he give the two tiny creatures that could help bring Inanna back to life?
23. What is the name of the judges of the underworld?
24. What do the judges want Inanna to give them?

25. Why doesn't Inanna give the judges her mother, her son or Ninshubur?

26. Who does Inanna send in her place to the underworld?

27. What does Dumuzi ask Utu to do?

28. Why does he ask Utu to do that?

29. Who or what decides to help Inanna find Dumuzi?

30. What did Dumuzi's sister ask Inanna to do?

REFELCTION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Ereshkigal treats Inanna as she does?

2. In what ways are Inanna and Ereshkigal alike?

3. Why do you think Inanna decides to hand Dumuzi over to the demon judges?

4. What do you think this story tells us about Sumerian conceptions of death and the underworld?