

Illumination

Siddhartha wandered far throughout India and encountered many strange events and people. He saw mountains and rivers and strolled through many towns and traveled many merchant paths. He conversed openly with people, until he realized that he had wandered far outside India. Although he could not speak the language, Siddhartha quickly became accustomed to the ways of these strange people west of his homeland. They spoke foreign, localized tongues that confused Siddhartha, so he decided to remain silent and listen, but speak only with his inner voice with that almighty syllable, Om.

The farther the mute wanderer traveled, the fewer the number of people who spoke his tongue who he could talk with. He quickly became lost in a sea of foreign peoples and customs, and he stopped his speech entirely after a few weeks. The native people frowned upon him, saying: "Who is this lowly Indian beggar? Why has he come here to take our food and our money?" So they shooed him away. Siddhartha let himself be shooed away, and he fasted and thought. He looked at the lives of the everyday people, the mindless peasants in the street that walked to and fro on the street, minding only their own business, constantly bickering over a bargain, always suspicious that they had been robbed of their money.

Siddhartha watched this all from dark alleys, under a rough cloak or bare skin, with dark and disgusted eyes. His eyes always looked into the distance. He thought of the nature and the order and structure that existed out there, not here in a dirty city. Over there was where the quiet hum of Om buzzed, between the rivers and the dirt and the sky. Here, Siddhartha could feel nothing but the dull buzz of an urban city. Although there was movement, there was no life. As worker bees in a beehive, the people moved and did their duties, but they neither thought nor did wise deeds. They did not pray, they did not fast, they did not notice the world around them.

Concentrating on a street vendor across the street, Siddhartha attempted to see the world from the man's point of view. He saw his customers, and he desperately tried to please them with guarantees of quality and taste. He saw a busy street and a struggle for a living. Scanning the street for prospective buyers, he saw himself, the ragged beggar staring at him. And then, not recognizing himself, he turned away from the shadow in the corner, the mud at the bottom of society. And then the shadow scuttled away, horrified at its own appearance, going back to wandering and thinking.

A little girl who had been eating dinner with her family spotted Siddhartha through the window. He peered back at her and smiled. She promptly excused herself and left, offering Siddhartha a few stolen slices of bread. Siddhartha smiled again, prayed for her good-fortune, and then she returned. When her parents had noticed the crime that she had committed, she was beaten and scolded, and the boys in the house chased Siddhartha to run away with tremendous threats of violence. Siddhartha fled to the woods. It had different trees than the ones he had grown used to when living with the Samanas, but he could feel the comfort in their silence, their peaceful countenances. Siddhartha also suddenly felt a longing for his dear friend Govinda, who was always calm and kind. The longing tugged at him, an anvil dropped into his thoughts. He began to cry, and in his weak state he quickly became somnolent and fell asleep.

In his dream, Siddhartha saw for an immense time the lack of order. He saw riots and unkind people, pillaging, raping, killing. He saw the horrors of man. He saw a wretched being being chased into the forest. Only after what seemed like many years did Siddhartha see armies of righteous men take back the world with kindness and peace. He saw a monk help up the man who had run away to the forest. He saw, much as the eye clears itself of the weariness of night, the world focusing to a blinding clarity. Just as the light seemed to penetrate throughout all the cosmos, Siddhartha woke up. Govinda was shaking him, waking him from the terrible yet auspicious dream. And Siddhartha thought, the world is about to change.

Missing Spiral Assignment Reflection

Content Choices

Although the plot of this short scene is very similar to many of the others in the novel with no introductions of new plot characters nor places, I tried to vary the lesson that he learned. In my story, **Siddhartha encounters a new swath of human emotions** that will broaden his empathy and love towards people. As he enters a new country, one of foreign people and slightly different ideas, he sees a greater diversity in life. It also provides him with a time of forced separation and silence, in which he could not speak to others in any comprehensible manner based on his distancing from home. And this time, with different people around him, he is for once regarded poorly: he is looked down upon. For once he does not rise to a position of high societal or spiritual status, but he seems simply as a beggar to the people and earns no respect for them. He is despised, hated. However, this feeling is somewhat mutual: he again feels the same contempt for the normal people, but in my story he does something new: he tries to take in the world from another perspective. He looks at the world from a commoner's view, a random choice out of all the simpletons he encountered and frowned upon. And for the first time, Siddhartha empathized with that merchant and saw himself from another perspective: he saw a shadow in the corner, a lost soul drowning in the busy river of life. And when Siddhartha came upon the girl who had helped him, he had been overcome with a sense of the deliberate unkindness of the world to the ones that are different; he notices the people's sense of security with their superiority over beggars and other lower-class people; they do not realize that they are citizens of the same world, that they are there to help each other out. As a result, they bring out violence to protect themselves, as the men chased out Siddhartha. And this dawns upon Siddhartha that it reflects himself, he who thought himself better than others because he was knowledgeable and used to be selfless and kind. And then, when abandoned by society by his rude ostracism, Siddhartha suddenly again feels hopelessness, but also a new, "normal" human feeling: loneliness. He feels the need to be with people again, with people that love him and give him direction in these moments of despair, such as Govinda. He wants a friend, or perhaps family, to guide him and care for him when it seems that he is so lost and alone in the world, when he has left the world he knew so long for an endless search whose goal he has yet to reach. So as he plunges into sleep, with extraordinary prescience he receives an optimistic message about the enlightenment of the world's people as a whole, an awakening on a scale a billion times greater than his own. And in this dream came people to rescue Siddhartha from his loneliness and despair. This hope that drives human society and innovation in even the darkest of times finally surfaces to the realist mind of Siddhartha. Hope, absent from his religious and physical observations prior to this experience, is what allows him to carry on. And lastly, by some inconceivable coincidence, he yet again encounters Govinda, who is also wandering and searching— this strengthens his subconscious premonition and reinforces his hope, thus foreshadowing a hopeful future.

Stylistic Choices

I focused a lot on the similarities in style and overall flow of the passage, and therefore it sounds very much like Siddhartha's previous adventures. Firstly, it reuses the spiritual language of the original novel, such as Siddhartha's name and the syllable Om— and does not include any incorrect information regarding Siddhartha or false inferences about his path. It is engineered to fit in the time when Siddhartha begins to wander, near his first "Awakening." Another core feature of my writing is that it is also very clear and rid of abstractions— there are not many difficult words, and the actions that Siddhartha carries out are very plain and clear. It is almost boring in that sense. In addition, there is little sentence and paragraph variety, similar to Hesse— there are only complete sentences written in grammatically correct English, with little-to-none "artful rule-breaking." However, this does not entail a lack of figurative language, which I employed: I tried to copy the use of analogies in the way Hesse did to help better illustrate the strange manner in which Siddhartha treated his work. I also added a few of the strange current-past tense conflicts, with "-ing" present-progressive and "-ed" past-tense actions. Another little detail is when I substituted in "the mute wanderer" for Siddhartha, thus changing the perspective suddenly from inside Siddhartha's head to a more outside, remote perspective, similar to Hesse's use of the "thinker" as a change of perspective. Lastly, I also tried to imitate Hesse's use of one-word titles that illustrated the main idea (as well as their formatting). Because Siddhartha goes through a lot throughout this excerpt, I chose to illustrate the idea of the final awakening of the world as he sees in his dream: an *Illumination* of the world. It is a single word that encompasses the idea of awakening (such as waking up to the light of the world), enlightenment (the light means wisdom and good) — which also brings up the dream motif that I incorporated with his foresightful nightmare, and the light-dark motif (good light pushing away the dark of evil). Additionally, it is a metaphorical description for the physical, blinding light Siddhartha sees in his dream.