

A Love Letter from Uruk
Or, How to become a Scribe in Mesopotamia
by
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Characters

- Debra** 'word' - arrives in Uruk from the 21st century. Doesn't know whether she's alive or dead. Her name is an essential component of the literary tradition
- Nana** the nominal head of a peasant household while her husband Ilulu is away. Debra gets placed with Nana's family while Ensi thinks about what to do with her.
- Banti** Nana's eldest son. Engaged to Tina. Marriage is a symbol of personal joy and social delight throughout the literary tradition.
- Haia** Nana's second son. Not yet a man ... but soon.
- Leqi** Nana's third son. The budding scribe of the title. Is he the reason for Debra's presence?
- Nuri** 'my light' - Nana's baby and her only surviving daughter ... so far. Nuri doesn't have much of a role in the novel, but we hope that she grows up to be a fine young woman.
- Ilulu** 'life' – returns from enacting Genesis 14 and sings the Song of the Sword in what we're sure is a very nice baritone. Debra and Celia, and Nana of course, all like Ilulu.
- Namtilla** A pregnant neighbor who enacts Exodus 4 for us. We still get a tiny glimpse of her again afterwards.
- Agga** mother of Qain and Habel. What can I say?
Agga's coming to live with Nana after she's lost both her sons, alters the family's fortunes for the better. This is important for funding Leqi's education.
- Habel** Younger son of Agga. Dead. Genesis 4.
- Qain** Older son of Agga. Exiled. Genesis 4.
- Ensi** head priest – and nominally in charge of Uruk. Takes looking after Debra seriously.

The king (Lugal) of Ur 'Shulgi' is standing in for Uruk's king during an interregnum. Leaves most of it up to Ensi. Does write a poem and we're there to see how it got to be written.
- Teacher** Teaches Debra and Leqi to read and write Akkadian and Sumerian. This gives us the chance to read several texts pertaining to school and grammar, the Sumerian King's List, a couple of Sumerian proverbs ... Some of my readers struggle to reconcile the two sides to his character and she's given him some space. Celia had a teacher very like him herself, and you mustn't mind. As you will see in the course of the novel – supper – city gate, he's fine. We see Debra getting her head around him.
- Gilgamesh** Precocious, loud, boisterous, outspoken. Struggling as we all are, to make life meaningful. Enkidu is Gilgamesh's soul-mate and it is his death that sends Gilgamesh out on the road to maturity.
- Tina, Warad and Sabitum** Tina is Banti's fiancé. Warad and Sabitum are her well-to-do city-dwelling parents.