

Student Essay on The River in Siddhartha

The River in Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse

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Essay

What does a river stand for? What does it symbolize? To Siddhartha, from the book *Siddhartha*, by Hermann Hesse, the river symbolized a teacher. The first incident is when Vasudeva, the ferryman, tells Siddhartha about the river and its teachings. This quote from Siddhartha shows the two men on a river bank talking. "The river knows everything; one can learn everything from it" (Hesse 105). This is when Siddhartha knows where he can learn what Vasudeva has. After discovering this, he soon learns something from the river. This quote shows Siddhartha and Vasudeva talking about his first learning. "Have you also learned that secret from the river; that there is no such thing as time" (Hesse 106)? This is a very wise piece of advice that Siddhartha learns from the river. In conjunction with that advice, he sees his life as the river and how that teaches him. In this quote, Siddhartha talks to Vasudeva about his newfound discovery. "That is it" said Siddhartha "and when I learned that, I reviewed my life, and it was also a river, Siddhartha the young boy, Siddhartha the mature man, Siddhartha the old man were only separated by shadows, not through reality" (Hesse 107). This shows Siddhartha that things in his life will stay with him, all his knowledge and memories of things and people he cared about. These three incidents show that the river was a huge mentor for Siddhartha.