

Who was Ozymandias? What Does He Stand for in the Poem?

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In Percy Bysshe Shelley's (1792-1822) poem "Ozymandias" (1818), we learn about a king who once had great power but is now forgotten. Ozymandias was a real king in ancient Egypt. He is known for his pride and strong rule. In the poem, however, he stands for the idea that no matter how powerful someone is, time will eventually destroy everything they built.

The poem begins with a traveler describing a ruined statue in the desert. The statue shows Ozymandias as a mighty king with a proud face. The inscription on the statue reads: **"Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!"** Ozymandias believed that his works and his empire would last forever. He thought that no one could match his power. But now, all that remains of him are broken pieces of the statue, scattered in the desert. The lands around are empty, with no trace of the empire he once ruled.

Through this image, the poem teaches a lesson. It shows that even the strongest rulers and the grandest empires will fade with time. Ozymandias represents human pride and the belief in immortality. But the poem reminds us that nothing lasts forever. In the end, nature and time are stronger than any king or kingdom.

Shelley uses Ozymandias to show that arrogance and pride are pointless because nothing in this world is permanent.