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Mrs. Graning

25 September 2024

### Beowulf the Epic Hero

Beowulf was a hero to all people due to his strength and courage to protect people from danger. Traveling to this land due to him hearing about a monster terrorizing this kingdom and killing the people at night at the mead hall Heorot. Beowulf talked to the king Hrothgar about the problem and was given the quest to hunt down the monster attacking the people known as Grendel. Beowulf and Grendel's confrontation led to Hrunting being broken on Grendel due to Beowulf's tremendous strength, which made him use his bare hands to defeat Grendel. Grendel's mom sees this and runs in to take his body back to their home of hell. Beowulf taking Grendel's arm to Hrothgar has a trophy for the rafters of Heorot. After the encounter with Grendel's mother, Beowulf has given Hrunting to kill her. He goes down in the fiery lake to confront her and gets attacked. While defending himself, he breaks Hrunting with his strength. This makes him use the giant's sword, cutting her head off and becoming victorious. He returns back to his homeland of Geatland and is crowned king. 50 years later, he is told of a dragon attacking villages and burning down villages. Beowulf and his soldiers arrive at the dragon's lair and are faced with storching fire coming from the dragon. Beowulf's men, in shock and fear from the sight of the monster, ran without hesitation, leaving Beowulf to himself against the dragon, melting his shield with his fire breath slowly. One soldier, Wiglaf, stayed and assisted him

against the beast. Beowulf is still bitten in the neck by the dragon, and with his poisonous breath, he knew it was going to be his last battle. He uses the rest of his strength to slice the dragon open and kill it. With his dying breath, he tells Wiglaf to give the treasures of the lair to the people and crown him king. Through Beowulf's inhuman strength and power, Defeating any monster, foe, or problem in his path, Beowulf is showing his heroic nature and his leadership, but also showing he'll do anything to achieve it. Beowulf achieving immortality through Lof as any pagon or Anglo-Saxon protagonist would.

Beowulf's inhuman strength and power to overwhelm everything. From the start of the novel, Beowulf is introduced with his incredible strength and leadership. It was stated that “The young warrior states his credentials: He has destroyed a tribe of giants, defeated sea monsters in a night fight, and returned from battle covered with the blood of his enemies.” (beowulf 205-206). The author uses this to show the pure brute strength showcased by him. Beowulf seems to be unstoppable due to defeating monsters that no normal human could ever think of defeating, also showcasing how brutal he is and will do anything to win. In the fight between Beowulf and Grendel, Beowulf rips apart Grendel brutally when his bare hands show how monstrously powerful he truly is through this line, “No weapon on earth is capable of harming Grendel. Beowulf summons even greater strength and rips Grendel’s arm completely out of its socket. Fatally wounded, Grendel slinks back to his swampy home to die.” (Beowulf 719-720). This type of power is what made Beowulf so formidable as a fighter as he is and so well known as the strongest warrior people know. As a result, Grendel’s mother comes to seek revenge for her fallen child and attacks Herot and gets chased back to her home of hell as Beowulf pursues her. While in his battle with her, his sword is shattered, so he used a special sword forged for the giants to cut her head off and bring it back to Herot. Beowulf shows his victory for the Danes

with this line: “The group returns to Heorot in triumph. Four men impale the heavy head of Grendel on a spear and lug it between them. When they arrive at the hall, the Danes gawk at the head in horror and amazement.” (Beowulf 1505-1506) This is shown to tell how old and how much hatred the people had for Grendel and the amount of torment he put them through for 15 years.

Beowulf’s strive to be a leader and his willingness to complete his quest at any cost. Beowulf being a leader of the Geats is a key part of his character and personality. Bringing his men to battle the monster they heard about. Going to Herot to try and lure out Grendel and let him kill one of his own men. Beowulf’s willingness to beat Grendel by “Mighty and canny, Hygelac's kinsman was keenly watching / for the first move the monster would make," and that he watched as Grendel "mauled a man on his bench" and "bolted down his blood." So on the face of it, Beowulf seems to sacrifice one” (Beowulf 736-738). This shows us that Beowulf will do anything to be victorious in battle, no matter the cost. Beowulf’s battle with the dragon also shows how great of a leader he is, as his own men leave him after seeing the dragon, but Wiglaf says due to all the great deeds that Beowulf has done for his kingdom. Wiglaf’s loyalty is shown through this line. “But they fled to the woods, where they saved their lives. Yet in one of them surged a feeling of remorse, for he well remembered the bonds of loyalty, as he considered his kinship.” (Beowulf 2515-2516). The novel shows us this to show us how much the people of Geat really care and love their king to the point of self-sacrifice. Beowulf’s testament to go through with his quest by going into Grendel’s home being described as Hell. Beowulf, “indifferent to death,” prepares himself for combat by donning his armor and girding himself with weapons (Beowulf 1442). The teller of this story says these descriptions of him getting

ready because even someone like Beowulf would need armor and weapons for where he's about to go.

Beowulf achieved Lof in Anglo-Saxon culture. Beowulf remained “immortal” through his dying words, wishing for his people to make a tower and bury himself inside of it. This is shown by him telling Wiglaf his dying wishes for his people and kingdom. In Pagan tradition, it's important to stay immortal through people's memories since they had no type of afterlife. As a result of the celebration after his death, having a funeral pyre and 15 people circling the tower to pay respect to him. The pyre is built high and decked with armor, according to Beowulf's wishes. The body is laid in and the fire is lit—its roar competes with the sound of weeping (Beowulf 2901-2902). This shows that almost everyone had the same opinion on him as everyone else, being the Geat's savior and warrior.

Beowulf is a timeless work of Anglo-Saxon literature, being a tale of an epic hero defending against the monsters and evil that no one else could. Even leading to his death, he still cared about his people, showing you that he is a true hero. Through Beowulf's inhuman strength and power, Defeating any monster, foe, or problem in his path, Beowulf is showing his heroic nature and his leadership, but also showing he'll do anything to achieve it. Beowulf achieves immortality through Lof as any pagan or Anglo-Saxon protagonist would.

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