

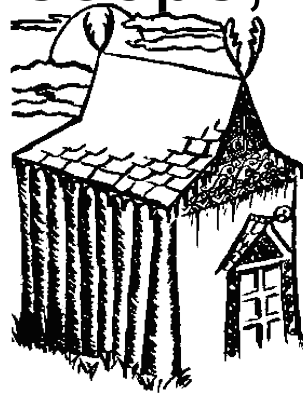


Beowulf

EPIC HERO

Plot Summary

- **King Hrothgar of Denmark**, enjoys a prosperous and successful reign. He builds a great mead-hall, called Herot, where his warriors can gather to drink, receive gifts from their lord, and listen to stories sung by the scops, or bards.



Plot Summary....

- But the jubilant noise from Heorot angers Grendel, a horrible demon who lives in the swamplands of Hrothgar's kingdom. Grendel terrorizes the Danes every night, killing them and defeating their efforts to fight back.



Plot Summary...

- The Danes suffer many years of fear, danger, and death at the hands of Grendel. Eventually, however, a young Geatish warrior named Beowulf hears of Hrothgar's plight. Inspired by the challenge, Beowulf sails to Denmark with a small company of men, determined to defeat Grendel.

Plot Summary...

- Hrothgar, who had once done a great favor for Beowulf's father Ecgtheow, accepts Beowulf's offer to fight Grendel and holds a feast in the hero's honor.

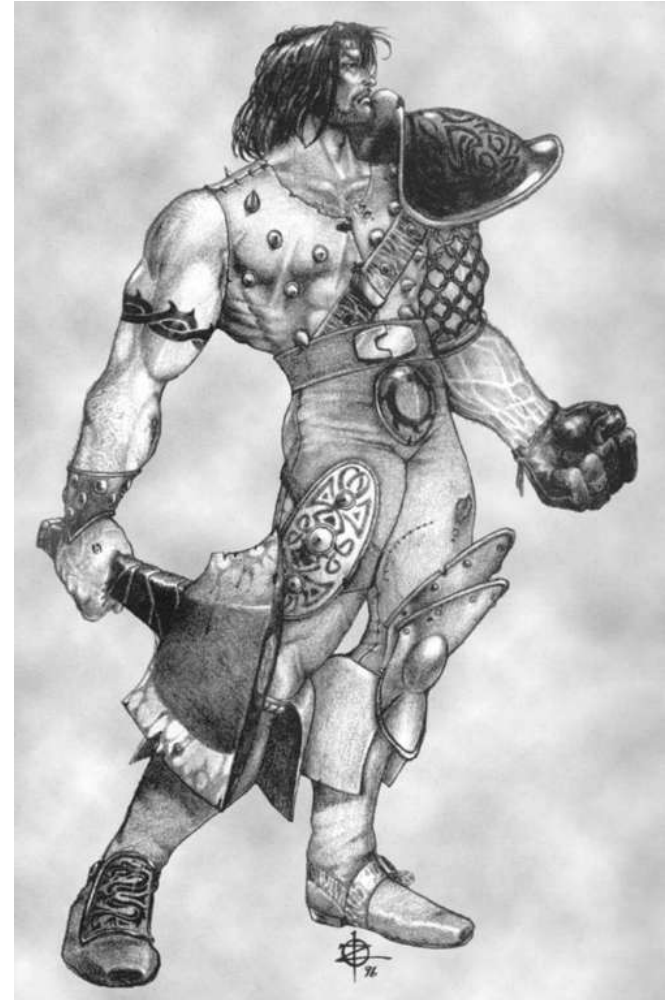


Plot Summary...

- During the feast, an envious Dane named Unferth taunts Beowulf and accuses him of being unworthy of his reputation. Beowulf responds with a boastful description of some of his past accomplishments. His confidence cheers the Danish warriors, and the feast lasts merrily into the night.

Plot Summary

- The Boast



The Boast...

- All knew of my awesome strength. /
- They had seen me bolstered in the blood
of enemies /
- when I battled and bound five beasts, /
- raided a troll-nest and in the night-sea /
- slaughtered sea-brutes. . . .

Plot Summary...

- At last, however, Grendel arrives. Beowulf fights him unarmed, proving himself stronger than the demon, who is terrified. As Grendel struggles to escape, Beowulf tears the monster's arm off. Mortally wounded, Grendel slinks back into the swamp to die. The severed arm is hung high in the mead-hall as a trophy of victory.



Plot Summary...

- **OVERJOYED, HROTHGAR SHOWERS BEOWULF WITH GIFTS AND TREASURE AT A FEAST IN HIS HONOR. SONGS ARE SUNG IN PRAISE OF BEOWULF, AND THE CELEBRATION LASTS LATE INTO THE NIGHT.**

Treasure for a hero...

- **CHESTS OF GOLD**



Plot Summary...

- **BUT ANOTHER THREAT IS APPROACHING...**
-

GRENDEL'S MOTHER!

- SHE —
- WOLF



Mama, cont....

- a swamp-hag who lives in a desolate lake, comes to Heorot seeking revenge for her son's death. She murders Aeschere, one of Hrothgar's most trusted advisers, before slinking away.



Plot Summary...

- To avenge Aeschere's death, the company travels to the murky swamp, where Beowulf dives into the water and fights Grendel's mother in her underwater lair. He kills her with a sword forged for a giant, then, finding Grendel's corpse, decapitates it and brings the head as a prize to Hrothgar. The Danish countryside is now purged of its treacherous monsters.

Grendel's Mother's Lair...



David Wyatt GRENDEL'S MOTHER Scholastic

Plot Summary...

- **The Danes are again overjoyed, and Beowulf's fame spreads across the kingdom. Beowulf departs after a sorrowful goodbye to Hrothgar, who has treated him like a son. He returns to Geatland, where he and his men are reunited with their king and queen, Hygelac and Hygd, to whom Beowulf recounts his adventures in Denmark. Beowulf then hands over most of his treasure to Hygelac, who, in turn, rewards him.**

Beowulf

- Modern Rendering of Beowulf, King of the Geats



Final Battle...

- **IN TIME, HYGELAC IS KILLED IN A WAR AGAINST THE SHYLFINGS, AND, AFTER HYGELAC'S SON DIES, BEOWULF ASCENDS TO THE THRONE OF THE GEATS. HE RULES WISELY FOR FIFTY YEARS, BRINGING PROSPERITY TO GEATLAND.**

The Final Battle...

- When Beowulf is an old man, however, a thief disturbs a barrow, or mound, where a great dragon lies guarding a horde of treasure. Enraged, the dragon emerges from the barrow and begins unleashing fiery destruction upon the Geats.

The Final Battle...

THE FINAL ADVERSARY...



THE FINAL BATTLE....

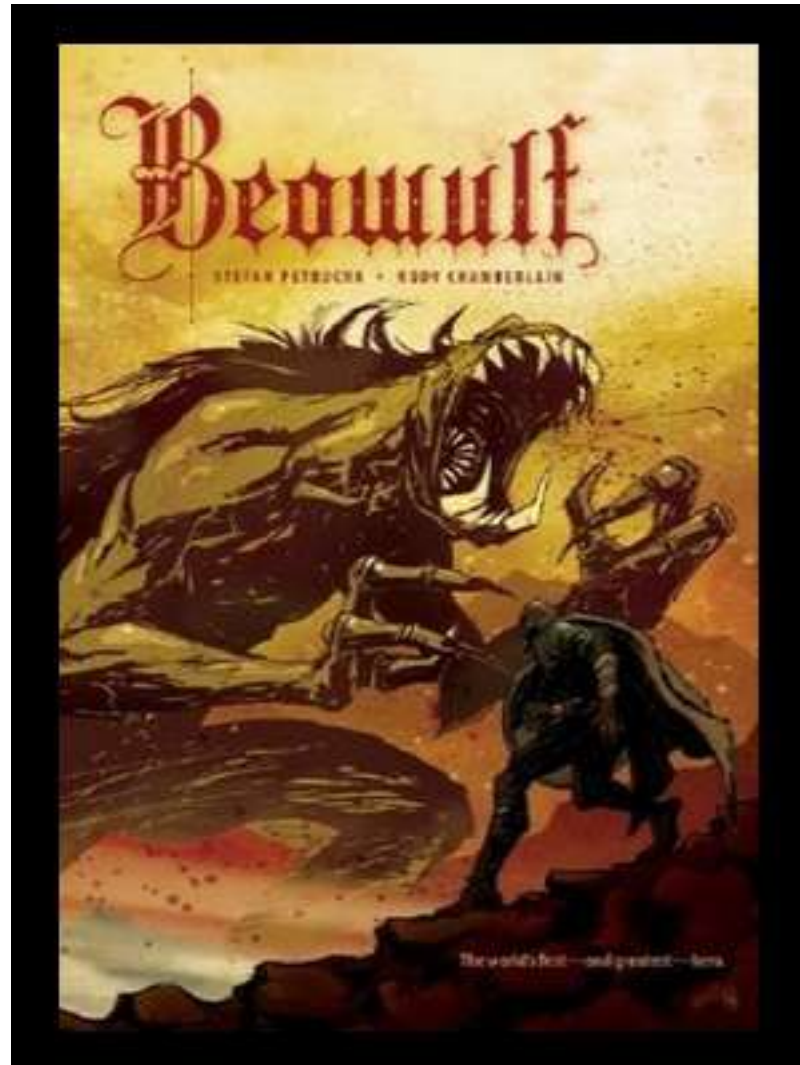
- **SENSING HIS OWN DEATH APPROACHING, BEOWULF GOES TO FIGHT THE DRAGON. WITH THE AID OF WIGLAF, HE SUCCEEDS IN KILLING THE BEAST, BUT AT A HEAVY COST.**



The Final Battle...

- **THE DRAGON BITES BEOWULF IN THE NECK, AND ITS FIERY VENOM KILLS HIM MOMENTS AFTER THEIR ENCOUNTER.**

The Final Battle....



Mourning Beowulf...

- **The Geats fear that their enemies will attack them now that Beowulf is dead. According to Beowulf's wishes, they burn their departed king's body on a huge funeral pyre and then bury him with a massive treasure in a barrow overlooking the sea.**

Mourning Beowulf...

- **A HERO REMEMBERED....**



THEMES

- **Establishing Identity**
- **The Heroic Code (Comitatus) and Other Value Systems**
- **The Difference Between a Good Warrior and a Good King**
- **Good vs. Evil/Darkness vs. Light**

MOTIFS

- **MONSTERS**
- **The Oral Tradition**
- **The Mead-Hall**

SYMBOLS...

- What are they and indicate their significance to the Plot...

Kennings...

- “mail-shirt” for armor
- “dwelling place” for residence
- “mail armor” for helmet
- “helmet bearers” for warriors
- “earth-hall” for burial mound or barrow
- “stone-cliffs” for rocks
- stout-hearted” for bravery
- shield-warrior” for fighter behind the shield.

KENNINGS...

- I. KENNINGS WERE FIRST USED AS SYNONYMS.**
 - A. ALLITERATION IN OLD NORSE WORKS REQUIRED THAT AT LEAST TWO WORDS BEGIN WITH THE SAME SOUND.**
 - B. SYNONYMS WERE REQUIRED SO THAT A LINE OF POETRY COULD BE ALLITERATED.**
 - C. KENNINGS WERE DEVELOPED AS SYNONYMS FOR USE IN ALLITERATING POETRY.**

kennings...

- II. The early kennings were comparatively simple in structure.
- A. A "simple kenning" will be defined as a kenning which expresses a single idea or thought.
- B. Examples of early kennings are "world-candle" (sun), "sun-table" (sky), and
- "horse of the sea" (ship).

kennings...

- III. Kennings gradually increased in complexity.
- A. The courtly language used by the Norse court-poets while performing before nobility caused kennings to increase in sophistication.
- B. Kennings came to be "compounded" upon one another: for example, if "ship" was a "sea-stallion" and the sea was the "whale-road", then a ship became a "stallion of the whale-road".

kennings...

- IV. Compound kennings.
- A. A compound kenning" will be defined as one or more kennings used inside of another kenning.
- B. Compound kennings became miniature riddles".

LITERARY DEVICES FOUND IN BEOWULF

- **Alliteration**
- **Allusions**
- **Personification**
- **Kennings**
- **Formulas**
- **Variations**
- **Are there others?....**