

Beowulf

Hear and listen well my weary-warriors and I will tell you a tale that has been told for thousands of years before.

Long, Long ago, Denmark was a wild place. Gruesome monsters roamed the misty moors. The king of the Danes, a warlord named Hrothgar, refused to be scared. He ordered work on a great mead-hall. Soon there it stood: made of the finest wood, decorated with silver and dazzling gold. Heorot was the name of the throne-room.

Each night, the king invited his bravest warriors to a lavish feast of roast meat, jugs of frothy ale and music for dancing feet. Inside, the men ate and drank until they fell asleep (but outside something evil was rising...).

Across the moor, a foul monster crawled from a swamp. Greedy and ghastly, it had claws like knives, burning eyes and an unholy stench. Suddenly, the cursed brute was creating havoc: he grabbed thirty men from their resting place and rushed to his lair. Grendel ruled the night and the great Heorot stood empty for twelve winters.

News of this dreadful tragedy spread far and wide to all the princes of different lands. But only one of them, the greatest and bravest - Beowulf he was called - decided this night-beast must be stopped. He stood proudly on the rocky cliffs, staring at the breaking waves below. As the sunlight broke through the clouds, his war-dress of chainmail shirt and long ashen spear glistened and sent shards of light in every direction. His golden locks danced in the Nordic breeze as he gripped his war-shield to his chest; his hands, which each held the strength of thirty men, were tense.

Aboard a seaworthy ship he sailed the seal-bath to Denmark with fourteen handpicked warriors. When Beowulf arrived, sudden hope warmed the old king's heart. Together they feasted until night fell.

As darkness swallowed the light, the swamp bubbled and Grendel rose. Grisly, grim and gruesome - no one word could describe this brute. Beowulf crouched in the shadows; his steely eyes fixed on the despicable monster. Without a weapon, Beowulf pounced, grasping the monster's arm. Grendel writhed and thrashed, but Beowulf would not let go. Grendel swiped and slashed, but Beowulf would not let go. The hall shuddered. Benches shattered. But still Beowulf refused to let go. He tugged the monster's arm and tore it from its body. Roaring in pain, the monster smashed through the walls and charged into the night staggering across the moor. Beowulf stood holding the monster's arm; he knew the monster would bleed to death. Grendel was defeated.

By the next morning the news of the great fight at Heorot had spread throughout the land. So that everyone should know that the tyrant was truly dead and their grief finally at an end, the hero hung high in the gables of Heorot where all could see that whole torn-off limb, shoulder, arm and hand, gruesome witness to the monster's violent end.