



- IN THE POEM, BEOWULF, A HERO OF THE GEATS IN SCANDINAVIA, COMES TO THE AID OF HROÐGAR, THE KING OF THE DANES, WHOSE MEAD HALL (IN HEOROT) HAS BEEN UNDER ATTACK BY A MONSTER KNOWN AS GRENDEL. AFTER BEOWULF SLAYS HIM, GRENDEL'S MOTHER ATTACKS THE HALL AND IS THEN ALSO DEFEATED

BEOWULF

BEOWULF'S TO BE THE STRONGEST,
ABLEST WARRIOR AROUND. IN HIS YOUTH,
HE PERSONIFIES ALL OF THE BEST VALUES
OF THE HEROIC CULTURE.

IN HIS OLD AGE,
HE PROVES A WISE AND EFFECTIVE RULER.

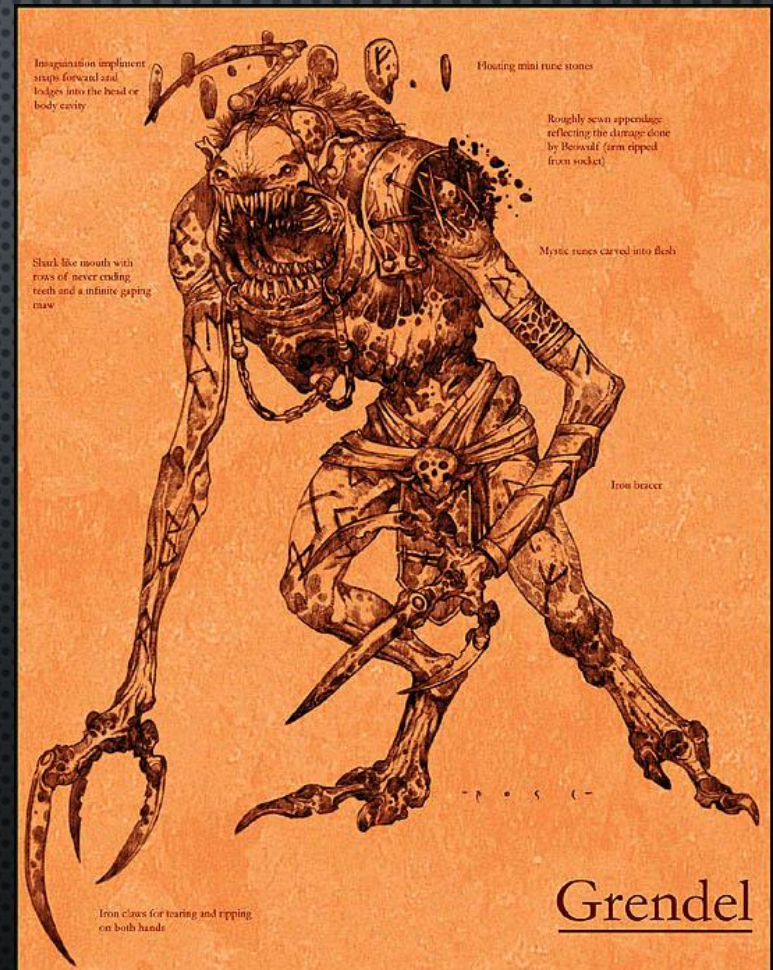




- BEOWULF AND HIS MEN SPEND THE NIGHT IN HEOROT. BEOWULF BEARS NO WEAPON BECAUSE THIS WOULD BE AN "UNFAIR ADVANTAGE" TO THE BEAST. AFTER THEY FALL ASLEEP, GRENDL ENTERS THE HALL AND ATTACKS, DEVOURING ONE OF BEOWULF'S MEN. BEOWULF HAS BEEN FEIGNING SLEEP AND LEAPS UP TO CLENCH GRENDL'S HAND. THE TWO BATTLE UNTIL IT SEEMS AS THOUGH THE HALL MIGHT COLLAPSE. BEOWULF'S RETAINERS DRAW THEIR SWORDS AND RUSH TO HIS AID, BUT THEIR BLADES CANNOT PIERCE GRENDL'S SKIN. FINALLY, BEOWULF TEARS GRENDL'S ARM FROM HIS BODY AT THE SHOULDER AND GRENDL RUNS TO HIS HOME IN THE MARSHES AND SLOWLY DIES.

GRENDEL

- GRENDEL, A TROLL-LIKE MONSTER WHO IS PAINED BY THE NOISE, ATTACKS THE HALL AND KILLS AND DEVOURS MANY OF HROTHGAR'S WARRIORS WHILE THEY SLEEP. BUT GRENDEL DOES NOT TOUCH THE THRONE FOR IT IS DESCRIBED AS BEING PROTECTED BY THE POWER OF GOD. HROTHGAR AND HIS PEOPLE, HELPLESS AGAINST GRENDEL'S ATTACKS, ABANDON HEOROT.
- BEOWULF, A YOUNG WARRIOR FROM GEATLAND, HEARS OF HROTHGAR'S TROUBLES AND WITH HIS KING'S PERMISSION LEAVES HIS HOMELAND TO HELP HRODGAR.



GRENDEL'S MOTHER

- THE NEXT NIGHT, AFTER CELEBRATING GRENDEL'S DEFEAT, HROTHGAR AND HIS MEN SLEEP IN HEOROT. GRENDEL'S MOTHER, ANGERED BY THE PUNISHMENT OF HER SON, APPEARS AND ATTACKS THE HALL. SHE KILLS HROTHGAR'S MOST TRUSTED WARRIOR, ÆSCHERE, IN REVENGE FOR GRENDEL'S DEFEAT



- AT FIRST, GRENDEL'S MOTHER APPEARS TO PREVAIL. BEOWULF, FINDING THAT HRUNTING CANNOT HARM HIS FOE, DISCARDS IT IN FURY. BEOWULF IS AGAIN SAVED FROM HIS OPPONENT'S ATTACK BY HIS ARMOUR. BEOWULF GRABS A MAGICAL SWORD FROM GRENDEL'S MOTHER'S TREASURE, AND WITH IT BEHEADS HER. TRAVELING FURTHER INTO THE LAIR, BEOWULF DISCOVERS GRENDEL'S DYING BODY AND SEVERS ITS HEAD. THE BLADE OF THE MAGIC SWORD MELTS LIKE ICE WHEN IT TOUCHES GRENDEL'S TOXIC BLOOD, UNTIL ONLY THE HILT IS LEFT. THIS HILT AND THE HEAD OF GRENDEL IS WHAT BEOWULF CARRIES OUT OF THE CAVERN, WHICH HE PRESENTS TO HROTHGAR UPON HIS RETURN TO HEOROT. BEOWULF THEN RETURNS TO THE SURFACE AND TO HIS MEN

THE DRAGON



- BEOWULF RETURNS HOME AND EVENTUALLY BECOMES KING OF HIS OWN PEOPLE. ONE DAY, FIFTY YEARS AFTER BEOWULF'S BATTLE WITH GREDEL'S MOTHER, A SLAVE STEALS A GOLDEN CUP FROM THE LAIR OF AN UNNAMED DRAGON AT EARNANESS. WHEN THE DRAGON SEES THAT THE CUP HAS BEEN STOLEN, IT LEAVES ITS CAVE IN A RAGE, BURNING EVERYTHING IN SIGHT. BEOWULF AND HIS WARRIORS COME TO FIGHT THE DRAGON, BUT BEOWULF TELLS HIS MEN THAT HE WILL FIGHT THE DRAGON ALONE AND THAT THEY SHOULD WAIT ON THE BARROW. BEOWULF DESCENDS TO DO BATTLE WITH THE DRAGON BUT FINDS HIMSELF OUTMATCHED.

- HIS MEN, UPON SEEING THIS DISPLAY AND FEARING FOR THEIR LIVES, CREEP BACK INTO THE WOODS. ONE OF HIS MEN, HOWEVER, WIGLAF, WHO FINDS GREAT DISTRESS IN SEEING BEOWULF'S PLIGHT, COMES TO BEOWULF'S AID. THE TWO SLAY THE DRAGON, BUT BEOWULF IS MORTALLY WOUNDED. AFTER BEOWULF'S DEATH, HE IS RITUALLY BURNED ON A GREAT PYRE IN GEATLAND WHILE HIS PEOPLE WAIL AND MOURN HIM. AFTER, A BARROW IS BUILT ON HIS REMAINS, WHICH IS ABLE TO BE SEEN FROM THE SEA.

