

British Literature

Reading 2 questions

1. "Shield Sheafson was one, scourge of all tribes, Took a maul to the mead-benches, mangled his enemies."
He is described as a man of war who gained great wealth and glory through pillaging and war overseas.
"A good king that was"
The poem calls him a good king, though he seems to be a very restless ruler.
2. "As ring givers rise, they reach their companions so later in life they won't be left on the field. His thanes will stand thick with him, there battle is joined."
The ring givers (people of wealth, kings) give generously so that he may not die on the field of battle alone, instead doing battle with those who are loyal to him.
3. A dragon dies alone while the good king is buried dutifully by those who loved him (loyal to him).
For a good king, treasure is meant to be given. A dragon hoards all of it, "Never enjoying a brass ring of it".
4. "The great and the good with glory were feasting, the scop sang their songs, the strings were well played, the harp filled the hall, a herald of joy."
Feasting, drinking, singing, music, and the giving of gifts
5. "Hatred for Hrothgar was held in abeyance but a son-in-law would soon bring samples of rage."
Foreshadowing of the attack of the monster Grendel
6. "Now a demon demented, in darkness a prowler, held a hard grunge when he heard with great pain, the great and the good with glory were feasting, the scop sang their songs, the strings were well played, the harp filled the hall, a herald of joy."
The celebrations in the mead hall agitated Grendel.
7. "So skilled in his singing, he sang the creation, the Almighty the almighty had ordered the earth to be fashioned, shining, the single plain surrounded with waters."
They were singing of God's works.
8. "By the Creator, as kinsmen of Cain, who had blood on his hands."
His forefather was Cain. He is shown to be a "kin-killer" like his ancestor.
9. "...Took a maul to the mead-benches, mangled his enemies."
He and Grendel both ransacked mead halls and killed in horrible ways.

10. "...he sang the creation, the Almighty the almighty had ordered the earth to be fashioned, shining, the single plain surrounded with waters."
They sing christian songs, but their actions do not show they fear the God they sing of.

11. "And a mightier man, massive and strong, I have never known. He is no mere retainer, dressed in such dread and deadly fell armor."
He is dressed like a mighty warrior.
"A sentry and sea-watch stands silent for years, long have I held watch as Hrothgar's eyes on the coast, and never have known such nobles to land here."
The man on watch is speechless from the sight of the approaching man.

12. You can see Tolkien pulling from the world that Beowulf and Grendel live in. Hoards of treasure guarded by dragons, the landscape, the people and the way they talk, act, and (especially) why they sing.

Reading 3 Questions

1. Through the first 9 verses the author is using descriptive words that make you see what he is writing.

2. He is a fierce fighter?
Bee-Wolf: A Bear

3. "I beat down and bound some beasts, five in number, I took out a troll-nest, I tackled sea monsters on the water and waves, drove warriors from Geatland who honestly asked for it."
He killed monsters.

4. "I have heard this hard monster uses no help from weapons, reckless, scorns to submit to the swordplay we use. To heighten Hygelac's glory, that his heart may be gladdened, I renounce sword and shield and will serve you bare-handed."
He plans to kill Grendel with his bare hands.

5. "Foe against foe, I will fight him for us all. Death comes, one will die, he will deem it God's justice..."
God will decide the outcome.
*"Weland wove it. Wyrð must go as it must."
Fate will decide it (the god of fate, Weland)*

6. "I sent wergild to the Wolfings, over the water I sent it, and Ecgtheow acknowledged me and accepted strong oaths."
Wergild is a debt or payment. Beowulf is paying back his fathers debt by killing Grendel.

7. "Sea bravery, strength in battle, sickened that man, who vicious and vexed, had his vitals eaten by envy."

He is jealous and threatened by Beowulf's presence.

8. The talk of quests and the encountering monsters reminds me heavily of Bilbo's journey throughout middle earth to get to the lone mountain.