

## Reading Questions 7

1. I think the poet agrees with Beowulf. But the poet does think he is bold and brave for it. And that no matter what happens Beowulf will get recognition.

*Beowulf tells Hrothgar that it is better to avenge your friends than to sorrow in silence. But the poet has just finished showing us the tragic effects of vengeance. In the Finnsburg episode, we seem to be intended to see the futility of being motivated by the desire for revenge, but here Beowulf seems to be advocating revenge as a way of winning fame before death, and in this case it seems very noble and we readers are supposed to be sympathetic.*

2. I think maybe Beowulf wants something to be remembered. So if he had a good-sized army or a group of honorable men, he'd want to be able to know that those were his men and others could know him by it. Also, the men did a lot for Beowulf, so it would be not admirable to just send them home, it would be if one of Beowulf's friends or Beowulf himself took care of them. *Before Beowulf descends into the lake, he asks Hrothgar to watch out for his men. Imagine for a moment a culture that operates with ring-givers and thanes.*

3. The sword was once treasure, but Beowulf notices it. The sword was big and heavy and forged by only the strongest men. But even the strongest sword couldn't resist the evil blood of Grendel's mother.

*This is something interesting that the poet is doing- and we're unsure of what were supposed to make of it. Neither Grendel nor his mother can be killed with regular weapons. He fights bare-handed.*

4. I would say that the big powerful sword is almost like Bilbo's sword in *The Hobbit*. Or maybe even Thorin's sword Orcrist, which he killed the Goblin king with. It has power with someone powerful wielding it. It's kind of like the sword Beowulf finds to kill Grendel's mother.

## Reading Questions 8

1. That Beowulf shouldn't end up like Heremond. And that he needs to be wary of that. And that ties in with the theme of treasure because treasure can pull you into places and mindsets that will eventually be your downfall. Hrothgar tells him to guard his heart of pride and not let it slip into his heart. He used the example of an arrow piercing his heart that can shatter you into a million pieces.

*In this section, we hear Hrothgar reflecting on life and temptation in a way that's quite profound. He sees what kind of man Beowulf is, and he can tell that he'll be a great king someday.*

*He's offering some advice now because he knows he'll probably never see Beowulf again, so he talks about a common temptation that comes to great men--that of pride.*

*He gives the example of Heremod, once a mighty man, who came to a bad end through stumbling at this particular point. In describing pride, he uses the imagery of a night marauder who will come in and destroy your soul, while the sentry sleeps, in just the way Grendel has terrorized Heorot. Grendel's attacks had left the mead-hall desolate and abandoned, in just the same way that the attack of pride caused Heremod to end his days desolate and abandoned. We also learn that after becoming proud, Hermon got greedy and refused to give rings.*

2. Maybe the fact that men can be envious and greedy for gold and treasure. And that it can affect your life in multiple ways that it can destroy you to the point of death.

## Reading Questions 9

1. The peace weaver isn't always reliable because there was already an incident in Finnesburg. So it is like a fifty-fifty chance of that idea/plan working.

*The poet has already given us one tragic story of a peace weaver in the Finnsburg Episode in which we are led to infer that the peace-weaver isn't always effective.*

2. Maybe the idea of sending in a messenger or person to make peace with the opposing side. Also, I think maybe Beowulf could almost have some pride in the future if not now about being able to defeat Grendel's mother.

*Beowulf has made his way back to his own land and his ring-giver Hygelac. If you look at the family tree at the beginning of this book, you'll see that Beowulf is Hygelac's nephew. Not just any nephew—he's the son of Hygelac's sister. In Saxon culture, that relationship was a very strong one. Their kenning for this was sister-son, and the bond you had to your sister-son was very tight. Tolkien works this in as well, when Thorin announces himself to the guards of Laketown, he introduces Fili and Kili as "the sons of my father's daughter." This tells us that Fili and Kili were the sister-sons of Thorin, just as Beowulf was the sister-son of Hygelac. The sons of your brother were still kin, but it was not as close of a relationship as the sons of your sister.*