

Caitlyn Wright

Mr. Weisner

Brit. Lit.

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Reading Seven Questions

- 1) Beowulf does not see anything wrong with revenge. He thinks that they should get their revenge on Grendel's mother. The poet does not really agree with Beowulf. The poet sees that revenge can easily just lead to a big blood-feud.

It could be said that the poet thinks that in terms of monsters, revenge is completely vindicated in a way that isn't amongst humans. Another way of explanation is that the poet is showing us that it is futile, but noble. Or, he may be showing us that even though there are noble heroes like Beowulf in this life, the whole thing is dominated by tragedy and futility. We were just shown in the Finnsburg Episode how futile revenge is.

- 2) Maybe Beowulf felt that there was nobody his men could go to at home, or maybe he didn't think his men would want to leave and go home. Maybe since Beowulf and his men had been so loyal and helpful to Hrothgar, Beowulf felt that Hrothgar owed it to them.

Beowulf knew that if he died, his thanes would look like cowards, and would need protection and inclusion, so he asked Hrothgar to look out for them.

- 3) Swords do not have any effect on Grendel or Grendel's mother, except for one ancient sword crafter by giants. Also, that sword actually *melts* after having been used on Grendel's mother and Grendel. We also see Unferth, who previously tried to make Beowulf look bad with a big prideful speech, now offer Beowulf his sword. They end up

trading swords, but Beowulf realizes Grendel's mother is like Grendel in that swords don't work on her.

- 4) In *Beowulf* only an ancient sword will slay Grendel and his mother, and in *The Hobbit* an ancient elvish sword absolutely horrifies the goblins.

Beorn lives in a great hall... sorta like a mead-hall. His name is the Saxon word for bear... Beowulf's name also means bear.... Beorn is also a skin changer, which is an old Norse mythology trait. Also, in Beowulf it appears that the sword he uses glows after having slain Grendel's mother and Grendel (again), and in The Hobbit Gandalf's sword glows after having slain the Great Goblin.

Reading Eight Questions

- 1) The example of Heremod was meant to illustrate that pride causes greed, which causes hate, which is why Heremod killed all his thanes. It ties into the theme of treasure because people become greedy for treasure. A little bit of it can make a man stuck up and proud, and then make them want a little more... and a little more... and more... and then they are encompassed in greed. For these reasons, Hrothgar tells Beowulf to guard his soul from thoughts of pride and greed. Hrothgar uses the imagery of a sleeping watchguard unaware that pride is creeping in and aiming for him to shoot and kill. This should remind us of Grendel, a wicked night marauder.

Attacks of pride will leave your life desolate and abandoned. Hrothgar warns Beowulf not to become a dragon king and hoard all his treasure, but instead to give generously.

- 2) In both *Beowulf* and *The Hobbit* characters have to be left by their beloved protectors. In *Beowulf*, Beowulf must leave Hrothgar and go home, and in *The Hobbit*, Gandalf must

leave Bilbo and the dwarves to attend to “pressing business.” Also in *The Hobbit* we see a dark scary forest filled with wicked nasty creatures, like the creatures in *Beowulf*.

Reading Nine Questions

- 1) The poet is saying through *Beowulf* that marriage with peaceweavers does not work out. Somehow the people will always be reminded of their feud and will always go straight back to fighting and killing.

The poet feels that ending a blood-feud is practically impossible and that vengeance is a monster that will never be satisfied.

- 2) Again, we see the significance of swords in both stories. We also see how in *The Hobbit*, the woodland elves are feasting and merrymaking and then say to have been attacked, like at the mead hall where everyone feasts and makes merry, but then are attacked at night.

*Tolkein also works in the sister's son relationship with Kili and Fili, like *Beowulf* was to Hygelac.*