

Beowulf Characters

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Learn about the characters of the Old English epic "*Beowulf*" here.

Characters

Main Characters

Beowulf: The central hero of the poem, Beowulf is a brave and loyal warrior who defeats Grendel, Grendel's mother, and a dragon. His strength, courage, and sense of duty embody the heroic code.

King Hrothgar: The wise and generous ruler of the Danes. Hrothgar is a loyal friend to Beowulf and values his heroism in defending Heorot Hall.

Grendel: A monstrous creature that terrorizes Heorot Hall. Grendel represents pure evil and hatred.

Grendel's Mother: A vengeful beast who seeks to avenge Grendel's death. She is a formidable opponent, but Beowulf kills her in her underwater lair.

Wealhtheow: Hrothgar's queen and a symbol of diplomacy and peace.

Dragon: A fire-breathing beast that wreaks havoc in Beowulf's kingdom after its treasure is stolen. The dragon fatally wounds Beowulf in their final battle.

Wiglaf: Beowulf's loyal companion and cousin. Wiglaf is the only warrior who helps Beowulf fight the dragon and is named his successor.

Other Characters

Aeschere: Hrothgar's trusted adviser, killed by Grendel's mother during her attack on Heorot.

Shield Sheafson: Hrothgar's legendary great-grandfather, the founder of the Danish tribe. He is celebrated for his strength and leadership.

Hygelac: King of the Geats, Beowulf's uncle, and mentor. Hygelac is a respected leader who dies in battle.

Hygd: Hygelac's queen and Beowulf's aunt. She is portrayed as wise and kind, a contrast to Queen Modthryth.

Heardred: Hygelac's son, who becomes king of the Geats after his father's death.

Ecgtheow: Beowulf's father, whose bond with Hrothgar creates a sense of loyalty between Beowulf and the Danish king.

Unferth: A Danish warrior who initially doubts Beowulf's abilities but grows to respect him after witnessing his bravery.

Hrethric: Hrothgar's eldest son and rightful heir, though his cousin Hrothulf eventually usurps the throne.

Hrothulf: Hrothgar's nephew, suggested by Queen Wealhtheow to inherit the crown.

King Heremod: An ancient king who betrayed his people.

King Hrethel: Beowulf's foster father and the previous king of the Geats. He raised Beowulf after his father's death.

King Onela: A Swedish ruler who seizes the throne and is eventually killed by Beowulf.

Queen Modthryth: A cruel queen. Her behavior contrasts sharply with the virtues of Queen Hygd.