



# The Tale of Beowulf: Sometime King of the Folk of the Weder Geats

*Anonymous*

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## **The Tale of Beowulf: Sometime King of the Folk of the Weder Geats Anonymous**

ARGUMENT Hrothgar, king of the Danes, lives happily and peacefully, and bethinks him to build a glorious hall called Hart. But a little after, one Grendel, of the kindred of the evil wights that are come of Cain, hears the merry noise of Hart and cannot abide it; so he enters thereinto by night, and slays and carries off and devours thirty of Hrothgar's thanes. Thereby he makes Hart waste for twelve years, and the tidings of this mishap are borne wide about lands. Then comes to the helping of Hrothgar Beowulf, the son of Ecgtheow, a thane of King Hygelac of the Geats, with fourteen fellows. They are met on the shore by the land-warder, and by him shown to Hart and the stead of Hrothgar, who receives them gladly, and to whom Beowulf tells his errand, that he will help him against Grendel. They feast in the hall, and one Unferth, son of Ecglaf, taunts Beowulf through jealousy that he was outdone by Breca in swimming. Beowulf tells the true tale thereof. And a little after, at nightfall, Hrothgar and his folk leave the hall Hart, and it is given in charge to Beowulf, who with his Geats abides there the coming of Grendel. Soon comes Grendel to the hall, and slays a man of the Geats, hight Handshoe, and then grapples with Beowulf, who will use no weapon against him: Grendel feels himself over-mastered and makes for the door, and gets out, but leaves his hand and arm behind him with Beowulf: men on the wall hear the great noise of this battle and the wailing of Grendel. In the morning the Danes rejoice, and follow the bloody slot of Grendel, and return to Hart racing and telling old tales, as of Sigemund and the Worm. Then come the king and his thanes to look on the token of victory, Grendel's hand and arm, which Beowulf has let fasten: to the hall-gable. The king praises Beowulf and rewards him, and they feast in Hart, and the tale of Finn and Hengest is told. Then Hrothgar leaves Hart, and so does Beowulf also with his Geats, but the Danes keep guard there. In the night comes in Grendel's Mother, and catches up Aeschere, a thane of Hrothgar, and carries him off to her lair. In the morning is Beowulf fetched to Hrothgar, who tells him of this new grief and craves his help

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