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Richard Claraval, an artist who interprets works by J.R.R. Tolkien, has also created his impression of Beowulf fighting Grendel. Online, via the Tolkien Library, the illustration is copyright Richard Claraval, all rights reserved. The image is provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with Claraval's work.

Arriving at his destination, Beowulf the Geat told Hrothgar the Dane he would battle the menacing creature who'd haunted Heorot, the great hall, for a dozen years. Boasting of his own abilities, the warrior said he needed no weapons to defeat the monster:

*When it comes to fighting, I count myself  
as dangerous any day as Grendel.  
So it won't be a cutting edge I'll wield  
to mow him down, easily as I might.  
He has no idea of the arts of war,  
of shield or sword-play, although he does possess  
a wild strength. No weapons, therefore,  
for either this night: unarmed he shall face me  
if face me he dares. And may the Divine Lord  
in His wisdom grant the glory of victory  
to whichever side He sees fit.*  
(Beowulf, Heaney translation, lines 677-687)

Beowulf's companions weren't as sure of the battle's outcome. None expected to survive. Undefeated, Grendel showed up after long-hall guards had abandoned their jobs:

*Then out of the night  
came the shadow-stalker, stealthy and swift;  
the hall-guards were slack, asleep at their posts,  
all except one ...*  
(Beowulf, Heaney translation, lines 703-706)

The "one" was Beowulf. And Grendel was completely unprepared for what came next.

Armed only with his own strength, Beowulf waited for the right moment. The monster believed he could devour everyone in the hall. That's what he always did.

Seeing Beowulf reclining, Grendel raised his claw. Then he was in an arm lock, within a grip so strong the monster had never experienced anything like it. He had come face-to-face with a warrior who meant to kill him. A warrior who had once battled five sea monsters, ending their lives.

The whole hall shook as man and creature battled. Beowulf's warriors tried to assist their leader, not knowing

their blades would never harm Grendel. He had worked a spell on them, so no cutting edge could cut him. Then ... a piercing scream filled the night air. With his unrelenting grip, Beowulf tore the monster's arm and shoulder from its body. Fatally injured, Grendel went home - to die.

Victorious, Beowulf held aloft the separated body parts. Victory was his. The fight with Grendel (this is an audio recording of the epic) was over. The monster would haunt Heorot no more.

Except ... there was another monster waiting in the wings. Waiting to avenge her son's death, Grendel's sea-hag mother came to Heorot where unsuspecting Danes were once again sleeping. Killing Hrothgar's most trusted friend, she was guaranteed a visit from the king's guest.

Beowulf would have to do battle again.

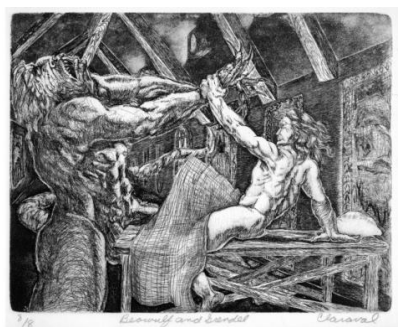
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## Media Stream



### BEOWULF

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