AWESOME stories

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

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In 2007, N.D. Hill created this artistic interpretation of Beowulf fighting Grendel's Mother from the *Beowulf* epic. She has been depicted in many different forms, including in film. Image copyright, N.D. Hill, all rights reserved. Image provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

Mothers, even monsters, mourn their young. Grendel's Mother was a grieving monster, seeking revenge. The text (in English translation) describes her:

> *. . . Grendel's mother,*
> *monster of women, mourned her woe.*
> *She was doomed to dwell in the dreary waters,*
> *cold sea-courses . . .*

And she would take action after Grendel died:

> *. . . And his mother now,*
> *gloomy and grim, would go that quest*
> *of sorrow, the death of her son to avenge.*
> (Online Book Initiative, Altman Translation)

Telling a distraught Hrothgar that it is better to avenge the death of his friend than grieve over his loss, Beowulf made ready for a second battle:

> *I guarantee you: she will not get away,*
> *not to dens under ground nor upland groves*
> *nor the ocean floor. She'll have nowhere to flee to.*
> *Endure your troubles to-day. Bear up*
> *and be the man I expect you to be.*
> (*Beowulf*, Seamus Heaney translation, lines 1392-1398)

Following the tracks of Grendel's Mother, the pursuing party came upon a gruesome sight. The monster had thrown the head of Hrothgar's friend to the foot of a cliff.

Continuing to trail her, the Geats and Danes came to the edge of a foul body of water. Bubbling with gore and filled with giant sea-serpents, the lake-water had to be the monster's dwelling place. Throwing a weapon at one of the water creatures, Beowulf killed it. Strapping on his chain mail and headgear, he dove into the murk.

When Grendel's Mother saw him, she wasted no time trying to kill Beowulf. With her claws she tried, but failed, to rip his chain mail. With her knife she tried, but failed to kill him. But her grasp was powerful and his own weapons were useless against her.

Then ... in the monster's home under the water, Beowulf saw a different weapon - one which belonged to Grendel's Mother. A heavy sword, to be managed only by the best warriors, was within his reach. Wielding it, he

cut off the monster's head.

Before he left her lair, Beowulf looked for Grendel. Finding the corpse of the monster who had terrorized the Danes for twelve years, he cut off Grendel's head and carried it to the surface. Swimming through the lake was easier now. All the sea-serpents, and other foul water trappings, were gone. They had vanished when Grendel's Mother breathed her last.

Shocked that Beowulf had actually survived, Hrothgar (this video is an interview with Anthony Hopkins who plays Hrothgar in the film) gave him great treasures. And Beowulf, with the head of Grendel on a pole, assured the king of the Danes that he, and his people, would no longer be terrorized by monsters.

Beowulf, future king of the Geats, had one more deadly battle to fight. This time, however, he would not survive.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/GRENDEL-S-MOTHER-Beowulf

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/GRENDEL-S-MOTHER-Beowulf

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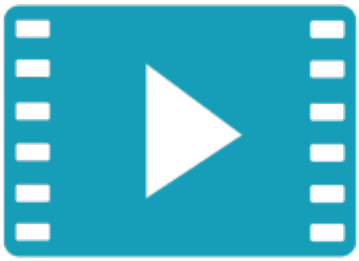

Beowulf - Trailer, 2007 Film
Trailer, from *Beowulf*. Copyright ImageMovers, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the film.
Director: Robert Zemeckis

Writers - screenplay: Neil Gaiman and Roger Avary

Production company: ImageMovers

Released by: Paramount Pictures
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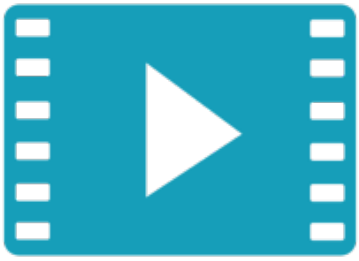

Beowulf - Interview with Sir Anthony Hopkins
Clip online, courtesy YouTube (and TalkingPicturesTV channel).
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