

Beowulf Copywork Ch.1 -3

"Friend Hunferth," said Beowulf quietly, "thou hast spoken much of Breca and of our contest. Now will I tell thee the truth of the matter. Rightly I claim to have the greatest strength upon the sea, more skill than any man upon the waves.

"Breca and I when we were boys talked much thereon, and swore that when we were grown to men we should venture our lives upon the sea. And even so we did.

"As we swam forth into the waves, our naked swords we held in hand. That was right needful to defend us against the whale-fishes.

"Breca was not fleeter than I upon the waves. Strive as he might, he could not flee from me. And so for five nights upon the sea we swam. Then a great storm arose and drave us asunder. Fierce and cold were the waves, dark and terrible the night. The north wind drave upon us till the ocean boiled in madness of wrath.

"Then too the anger of the sea-monsters arose. Glad was I then that my shirt of mail, gold adorned and trusty, wrapped my body. For a spotted monster seized me fast in his grim grip and dragged me to the floor of the sea. But I strove with him and my bright blade was dyed in the blood of the sea-brute.

Beowulf Copywork Ch. 4-6

Beowulf, watchful and angry, yet curbed his wrath. He waited to see how the monster should attack. Nor had he long to wait.

Quickly stretching forth a fang, Grendel seized a sleeping warrior. Ere the unhappy one could wake he was torn asunder. Greedily Grendel drank his blood, crushed his bones, and swallowed his horrid feast.

Again the goblin stretched forth his claws hungry for his feast. But Beowulf raising himself upon his elbow reached out his hand, and caught the monster.

"Sorrow not, O king," replied Beowulf. "It is ever better to avenge than to grieve for one's friend. To each of us must death come, and well for him then who hath done justice while he yet lived. Arise, O king, let us see quickly the track of Grendel's kin. I promise thee she shall not escape. Do thou but have patience this day, that only do I ask of thee."

Then up sprang the aged king. "May the gods be praised," he cried, "who have sent me such a man."

As the Water Witch dragged Beowulf along, wondrous sea-brutes followed them. Beasts they were with terrible tusks, shining scales and sharp fins. With these they attacked the hero so fiercely that his armour was rent, yet was he unwounded.

Beowulf Copywork Ch. 7-10

"Behold, O king!" he said, "we bring thee these offerings in token of victory. From the conflict under the water have I hardly escaped with my life. Had not the All-wise shielded me, I had nevermore seen the sun and the joyful light of day. For although Hrunting be a mighty and good sword, in this fight it availed me nothing. So I cast it from me and fought with mine hands only.

But when the Dragon awoke his fury was great. Well knew he that mortal man had trod his cave and stolen of his hoard.

"Thou art the last of our race," he said. "Fate hath swept away all my kinsmen, all the mighty earls. Now must I too follow them."

That was the last word of the aged king. From his bosom the soul fled to seek the dwellings of the Just. At Wiglaf's feet he lay quiet and still.

They praised his valour, they sang of [114] his manhood and his courtesy. Even so it is fitting that a man should praise his liege lord and love him.