

'Beowulf Retold'

Video Script



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Beowulf Retold ©2012

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Beowulf Retold (Video) Script © 2012

Part 1 was written was completed in 2005, Parts 2 in 2007 and Part 3 in 2008 to 2010.

The video Script is an extension of my original version and I now consider it my final version. I call it my video script because this is the same script I used for filming the same video advertised on my website. What you will find in this script is a mirror image on the video.

Intro: Please Read

Thank You for reading my script for **Beowulf Retold**. I truly appreciate your support in my efforts to bring material like this alive through storytelling. If you desire to use any part of this script whether it be as a reference in a paper of any kind or article (of any kind or nature), book (ditto) or on any kind of social network media (ex. Facebook) on the internet or otherwise it is **copyright protected**. As long as you are not using it for profit all I ask is that you contact me and ask permission to use it. My email is above and I will respond within a reasonable time period. Usually within a day. If any part of it is used in any form shape or way in the above media mentioned then you must give me credit for it. That is an absolute. If you want to use any part or whole of **Beowulf Retold** in some profitable way then you must get my permission.

The most important thing for any writer or storyteller is to get credit for what they do by those who are inspired by it. I have no desire to lock down my version of Beowulf with technicalities but I still need to protect my writes as a creator. With that said I can assure you I would appreciate any and all kinds of exposure if you like this script / book/ story. Storytellers live by word of mouth. I kept this script free to make it accessible. The video of Beowulf Retold uses this same script throughout. The obvious difference is that I am performing it in the video. My storytelling performance and style is what brings depth to the writing. So if you like the script I would hope that you would enjoy the video.

About my Version of Beowulf I had studied Beowulf for over 12 years running before I started trying to write my version of it back in 2003. I am not a professor but I am a big history and literature buff. I have been performing as a storyteller since 1997. I am a professional storyteller who wanted to find a way to put the drama into a great story and make it accessible to modern day folk. Yet I wanted to retain the sound and feel of the original. It is not meant to be neither Alliterative nor poetic. It is written in broken sentences intentionally to help create emphasis in reading it. I think you will find it easy on the tongue. I have performed various versions of **Beowulf Retold** in high schools and at Festival with wonderful responses to my presentation.

All that said I hope you like it and I hope to hear from you regarding my version and what you think of it. If you are a student and you think my version and video might make a difference then please tell your teacher or professor about it.

Thanks for your support

God Bless

Gary Whitaker / The Storyman

Beowulf Retold

Part 1

Hrothgar's Hall

It dwelt in the darkness
Beneath the swamps and the moors
Deep in the bowels of the earth
In cold stone walls
Grendel, safe within his lair
Listened

From somewhere above his lair
On the distant moor beyond his swamps
Came sounds of harp, song and laughter
Songs of warriors resonated within his chamber
These sounds of joy and laughter
Came from the hall of King Hrothgar
His great warriors hall, Heorot
These cheerful sounds churned Grendel's flesh
Brought bitterness to his heart like a cruel bile
For Grendel was not like man
He was a repulsive creature to look upon
A cruelly misshapen creature of nature
And because of this
He hated anything of beauty
It filled him with rage and the blood lust
He would take his revenge
Because Grendel was a beast of great size and strength
So strong was he that no man could match him
And no man made sword would bite his flesh
For it was protected by an ancient magic
He would even the score
Grendel would claim his due blood payment
In human flesh

In the dark
With only the light of the moon and stars

to guide his path
Grendel rose from the depths of the earth
Seeking that which spurned his hate
Swiftly he traveled across the bogs, moors and crags
Toward the source of his misery
Till finally he spied the Hall and village
Setting atop a high crag
From which song and harp he still heard
Like a wolf he stole into the village
Till finally he stood at the great oak doors
Of Hrothgar's Hall, Heorot

The great oak doors lay open
For none within feared anything without
Within the hall Grendel found 30 sleeping warriors
All gluttoned with mead, wine and food
Sleeping on the floor of Heorot
Quietly Grendel closed the huge Oak doors
He barred them, locked them
So that none could escape
The smell of human flesh filled his huge nostrils
The hunger for man was upon him
Nervously he clicked the long razor sharp talons
Which dangled from his long monstrous fingers
He ground the rows of jagged sharp teeth in his cavernous mouth
Lusting for the feast that lay before him
He let slip a low guttural laugh from his cruel mouth
Which echoed morosely against the high walls and rafters of Heorot
A few of the drunken warriors sluggishly stirred from their peaceful slumber
To find a hideous beast standing in the dim light of the scones
The soldiers cried out the alarm
"Troll, Troll..to sword to sword!"
The soldiers rose with sword and shield
And attacked the hideous demon
Their man made swords rose and fell rose and fell
Striking his flesh again and again
Harder and harder with all their might
The warriors desperately struck the demons flesh
But their swords did not bite
And so that night

One by one he took them at his leisure
Ripped them limb from limb
Feasted on their plump flesh
Gorged himself on arms, legs and torso's
The screams of the warriors echoed throughout the hall
Late into the night
And filled the village with its terror
Tell at last Grendel had satisfied his lust

When morning came, Hrothgar rose
He had no knowledge
Of the events from the night before
His chamber was such that no sounds entered
As he approached the hall in the early hours of dawn
The sun yet to rise above the horizon
He noted the ground black like blood
And as he approached Heorot
He heard the sound of buzzing
As if thousands of bees had filled the hall
Then he saw his once great oak doors
In the dim morning light
Hung askew as if torn from their massive hinges
And stained dark with flesh and gore
And a feeling of dread filled him
As he entered Heorot
What he found within
Was a nightmare beyond his imagination
It stunk of death and destruction
He found not but blood and gore
From the floor to the high rafters
And not one warrior , not one
Did he find alive
For Grendel had slaughtered them all

Word spread of Hrothgar's woe
From bard to bard
Village to village
Across the land
Hrothgar offered gold to any warrior
That might slay the beast

Drive him from his Hall
Warriors came boasting of heroic deeds
Vowing to Hrothgar and Wealtheow that they would be their hero
Vowing upon death to rid them of this demon
Wealtheow and Hrothgar listened
But it was always the same
In the morning
Grendel was always the victor
And Hrothgar fell into despair

And so it was
For 12 long years
Till finally word of Heorot
Reached the land of the Geats
A merchant told the tale
In Hygelac's hall

Hygelac and his warriors
Were moved to pity for Hrothgar's curse
For the king's hall was truly the heart of the kingdom
Grendel had stripped him of that
Bereft him of his very essence
But only one was moved
To more than pity
His name was Beowulf

Beowulf was a Geat of great renown
A warrior much praised
Amongst his people
A man of tremendous strength and courage
His name meant 'bear'
And some claimed he had the strength of 30 men
Yet he was not a man to lord it over others
He believed in justice
In doing what was right
A man whose goodness
Matched the evil of Grendel's hate

Beowulf had known Hrothgar in times past
The great king had once saved his father's life

Ecgtheow
His father, had killed
A leader from another village
In a heated dispute
A man of some worth
The dead man's family had demanded
Either his head or a blood price
The value in gold of the man that he had murdered
In exchange for their loss
Ecgtheow did not have the blood price
Feared for his head
Hrothgar came to his aid
Saved his life
Paid the blood price
Made him his man
Ecgtheow served as his warrior for many years
Thus Beo grew up under Hrothgar's rule
Thanks to Hrothgar's kindness
It was time he thought
To repay Hrothgar's gift
He would go to his aid
He would try and free him of his demon

Beowulf went to his King Hygalec
Seeking men and ship
Asking Hygalecs blessing
To go to Hrothgar's aid
Hygalec feared this adventure
Tried to dissuade him
For Geats and Danes were often enemies
Raided each others shores
Killed their men
Made slaves of their women
Burned their villages
Hyalec thought it not wise
To go to Hrothgar's aid
But Beowulf's passion was such
That Hygalec gave him men and ship

With fourteen faithful warriors
Beowulf set sail
Across the great whale paths
Destined for the distant lands
Of Hrothgar's Kingdom
With the wind in their massive sail
The great dragon prow long ship
Danced lightly over the vast sea-ways
Bounded over wave and foam
Bending the waters to it's will
It flew like a bird
Raced like a young stallion
Leaping from wave to wave
Plowing through the shimmering waters
Till finally the ship found rest
On the far shores of Hrothgar's Realm

A shore sentry saw Beowulf's long ship
Filled with battle ready warrior's ground to shore
Challenged Beo's purpose.
'Friend or foe '
'We have come to serve your lord
We have come to slay his demon'
The sentry praised the Geats
Lead them straight to
The high gabled hall of Heorot
It looked grand from the outside
A massive structure of Oak and Stone
A hall of great beauty
Heavily etched and detailed oak doors greeted them
Massive and ominous
That now bore marks of past battles
The mark of a monster
Matchless was the size and craft
That had made Heorot
A thing of legend
Thus Beowulf entered Heorot
But within the hall it was dark and gloomy
Light had no power in this place any more
Oak pillars, floor and walls stained dark by blood

The columns gouged by huge fangs
The great hall smelled of death
A lifeless void a high gabled tomb
Enough to make ones flesh crawl
If doubts wetted Beo's fears
He would be sure that none saw it

Freely Hrothgar welcomed the Geats
Honored his young friend Beowulf
Set table with meat and mead
Gathered round his Warriors and let them tell their tales
Beo and his men listened
And through their words
Gruesome nightmares unfolded
The demons lust brought to life
Beo looked deep into their eyes
He saw the fear in their faces
He knew that Grendel held sway here

Grendel was a creature from Ancient times
Some say born of the sins of Cain
An evil as old as mankind himself
Beo knew that it would take more
Than his famous sword
To quell this vengeful hate

Beo saw what must be done
To end this cruel blood feud
For he could see plainly
By the words of Hrothgar's men
That no man made weapon
Would stay this beast hand
Beo would have to pit his goodness
Against Grendel's evil
Flesh against flesh
Strength against strength
Let God decide the victor

To King Hrothgar
And his men

Beowulf pledged
To fight the beast
Without armor, shield or sword
He would face Grendel
One on one
He would challenge Grendel
With just what God had given him
His goodness and strength
Hrothgar and his men fell back in horror
Beo, they cried, ' had set his doom'
His boast would end all of their lives

Night fell, Darkness shrouded the land
Hrothgar and his men abandoned the hall
Leaving Beowulf and his fourteen companions
To face the great beast
Alone
As they bid fare the well
They all knew that these brave warriors
These brave Ring Thaners of Hygelac
Were about to die a hideous death
And Hrothgar was moved, to even greater sorrow
for his young friend Beowulf

The Geats lay down the shields as pillows
Kept their swords within their grasp
Slept in their armor
Prepared to wake at a moment's notice
All that is except Beowulf
Who put away his armor, shield and sword
Just as he had promised
And lay next to his men
As if he were naked for he was in every sense he was
And awaited his destiny
That had been set ages ago
In the web of fate spun by the Norn's
Thus prepared for what might come
They slept and waited

In the dark as was his nature
Came Grendel
He greedily sought the great hall
Lusting for fresh flesh to fill his gut
Moved with ease across the bogs and moors
All creatures in his path
Smelled death and ran in terror
When he came to the village
He walked without fear through the streets
Flaunting his power of fear and hate
Dogs howled, cats hid and the rats ran before him
When he entered the hall of Heorot
He smelled human flesh within
And his lust consumed him

Grendel moved swiftly
Beo feined sleep so he waited
He smelled the beast as it entered
Even he found the stench overwhelming
Steeled himself for battle
He thought that Grendel would take him first
Since he lay without armor, easy pickings
Grendel saw Beo's form
Could not believe his gall
The man lay without armor amongst his men
Grendel smiled to himself
How easily he would devour his unprotected flesh
He saw that he was a large man
Larger than most
But Grendel would display his disdain
And put fear into his soul
And take the warrior next to Beo first

Grendel grabbed the sleeping warrior
Who lay next to Beo
It happened so fast
Grendel devoured the warrior
Ripping flesh and crunching bone

Greedily gulping down his feast
Splattering blood and gore over Beo's naked body
Beowulf had not a chance to react
Never in his life had Beowulf encountered
Such a cruel heartless beast
Beo knew he would be next
Knew that this demon must be stopped
That not another warrior should suffer
Such a hideous fate
Prepared himself to face his destiny

The demon grabbed Beo's arm
Thinking to devour him
But Beo wrapped his huge hand around Grendel's arm
And squeezed with such force
That Grendel was suddenly afraid
Never before had Grendel felt such strength
Beo's grasp locked onto Grendel's arm
With such power
That Grendel reeled from the pain
His cry filled Heorot
Awakened by Grendel's screech
Beo's warriors rose to the fight

Beowulf and Grendel
Struggled in the midst of the hall
Hand bound to arm, in vice like grips
The two tossed each other from side to side
Grendel trying to match Beowulf's strength
But no matter what Grendel did
He could not best this Warriors fearful grip
The thirteen remaining warriors
Swiftly attacked with their swords
Hacking at Grendel's flesh with all their might
Their man made swords rose and fell, rose and fell
But soon they discovered that their swords were useless
For no matter how hard they struck
Their swords would not bite his flesh
And now the pledge of Beowulf fell full onto their minds
They now saw that their swords were useless

Now their lives remained in Beowulf's strength and goodness
They stepped aside and awaited their destiny
For they would not abandon their lords side
They would die beside him if he could not best the beast

Like gods in mortal battle
The two struggled and fought
Throwing each other this way and that
Each trying to gain superiority above the other
Grendel unable to break Beo's grasp
Shrieked like a demon from hell
No matter what Grendel did
Beowulf always bested him
The building shook and moaned with their battle
As Beo flung the monster from wall to column
Slamming his huge body with such force that the building shook

Beo's warriors watched in wonder as this horrid demon
Was battered about like a toy
With every passing second
Grendel grew weaker and Beo stronger
The beast wailed piteously from fear and pain
Grendel struggled to pull away,
A desperate look filled his black eyes
Like a wolf caught in a steel trap
Fear overcame it
Filled it with dread and despair
He would do anything to break free
For never before had he faced a warriors such as this one

Desperate to break free
Grendel took hold of a massive oak column
Anchored his one free arm
To the great oak support
So that he might pull free
Of Beo's grating grasp
But Beowulf would not let go
Beowulf watched the beast eyes
Saw fear and despair
Knew that he would best this cruel beast

He saw death in the demons eyes

Anchored to the pillar
Grendel pulled with all that he had
Focused all his remaining strength
Into that stout oak support
He tried to pull away
To break Beowulf's grasp
The oak column moaned and groaned
Beneath the fury of their battle
Debris fell from the roof
As beams shook and grated above them
Cracks suddenly appeared in the length of the massive column
That Grendel held onto
Grendel set his legs and leaned back with all his might
Wrapping his massive arm completely around the column
He pulled with all he had left
Beowulf would not be bested
He called on his great father to bless this venture
To help him doom the cruel beast
To help him end the ancient blood feud

He set his powerful legs and gripped Grendel's arm with both hands
And pulled with all the strength
That the great father had found him worthy of having
Grendel cried piteously
But try as he might
Only his flesh gave way
The cruel sound of flesh ripping and bones cracking
Filled the air as did Grendel's horrid screeched
Blood poured from huge open wounds in his monstrous shoulder
As flesh was shorn from flesh
Grendel's eyes widened in horror
His howl filled the chamber
Echoed from wall to rafter

And then Suddenly it happened
Grendel's Arm
The arm in Beo's grasp
Gave way

It ripped free
Tore from Grendel's body
Shoulder and arm
Leaving it in Beowulf's grasp
Grendel fell back with the sudden release
He was free but how?
An unnatural Silence filled Heorot
Debris continued to silently float from the high gabled roof
It drifted between Beo and Grendel like autumn leaves
Grendel stumbled about in shock

Looked to himself to see a huge gaping hole
Where his arm had once been
Shoulder and arm torn away
Tattered flesh only remained
Streams of blood
Spurting and poured from the gaping hole
He shook his massive head in disbelief
How could it be so?
His eyes returned to Beowulf
Saw Beo's mouth screaming a silent death chant
Grendel's ears heard nothing except the pounding in his head
The world around him swirled out of control in a surreal way
This could not be so and yet it was
How could a man rip his arm from his body?
He shook his head in disbelief
He let go of the column
He knew he had been delivered a death blow
He turned away, swaying, stumbling
Mortally wounded
Like a drunken man
Grendel stumbled out of the great hall
Leaving a blood trail in his wake
No man followed him
His wound was mortal
All knew that death now stalked him
He bellowed a horrid cry into the night
A cry of such pain as none had heard before
And he was gone never to be seen alive again

The warriors all stood in wonder
Watched as Grendel disappeared into the gray mist
Until he was gone from sight
Then they looked upon Beowulf
He held Grendel's arm up high above his head like a trophy
The arm was huge, twice that of Beowulf's in length
None could believe what they had witnessed
Truly the great Father favored this one
Beowulf let loose a warriors cry
A cry of victory
And the hall of Heorot
Once again rang out with the victorious voices

In the morning when King Hrothgar came
He expected to find not but blood and gore
Not a warrior did he think he would find alive
As he approached the hall in the early morning light
He saw a huge arm hung from the high gable hall
Could it be? Had Beo bested the beast
He drew near the monstrous arm
It was unlike anything he had ever seen before
Steel like dagger claws dripped with blood
Onto the floor of Heorot
He ran into the hall to find Beo and his men
Bathed in the glory of the early morning light
Looking like gods from ancient times
Standing and waiting for him
He fell to his knees and cried out
'Oh great father you have sent me a savior'
And he hugged Beo and called him his son
Called him the greatest warriors living
Blessed him for his strength and goodness

That night Heorot filled with the sound of harp, song and laughter
Hrothgar prepared a feast suitable for a king
His bard told tales of great hero's
Of which now Beowulf would be another
To all of Beo's men

Hrothgar gave presents of gold and steel
Arm bands of gold and ancient swords of great value
He even paid the blood price for the one who Grendel had slain
And to Beowulf he gave presents
Fit for a king or a king's son
Twelve white horses with saddles of gold
Armor and swords of ancient making
He offered Beo anything that he wanted
Would grant any desire
Gave him gifts fit for a king
Then Hrothgar's queen, Wealtheow, gave Beowulf
A necklace a great workmanship
A piece of such value that only a king would own it
She gave it to him willingly
Called him the greatest warrior living
And none would nay say her claim
For all believed that he was
All that night the warriors celebrated
Heorot was alive once again

That night Beowulf and his men
Slept not in the hall
For now this was a pleasure
For the Dane's to enjoy
A peaceful fear ridden night
That none of Hrothgar's Warriors
Had seen for twelve long years
The heart of the kingdom was restored

But what they did not know
What they could not imagine
Was that Grendel's hate was more than just his own
It was a thing that had been passed down to him
As often families do
Grendel's mother came that night seeking revenge
A blood payment for the loss of her flesh
With a blood lust in her heart
She would take her revenge
Even the score

The cycle had not yet been broken
The hate and malice that fed such feuds still existed
She would have her revenge
End Part 1

Part 2

Beowulf Pledge

Like a thief in the night, she came
The death wail of her child etched in her mind
Echoed in her head
His cries of misery, pain
Branded her senses, like lightening striking her flesh
She held it in like a damn
Focused on her wall of hate
Used it like a charm
She would not be cheated of her blood price
They would pay for Grendel's death

Herot was free, Grendel finally banished
Never to return
The Blood Feud ended
That night Celebration had filled the great Hall
Song and Laughter resounded off the distant moors
The warriors of Hrothgar , weary with sleep
Drunk with mead, they let slumber take them
Closed their eyes for they had naught to fear
So they thought, so they rested
None heard her for like a mouse she moved
Slipped between cracks and withered like a snake
Took Aeschere without a sound
Slit his throat with razor sharp claws
Carried him away, leaving his warm blood as a trail

None would know of his loss till dawn
Revealed the truth

Hrothgar's misery was doubled for Aeschere was his best
None was closer to his lord than this noble man
Now Aeschere was gone, Murdered in his sleep
Soon the truth of Grendel's mother was revealed
Grendel had kin and Beo could see
That the blood feud was not yet ended
Beo had come to return a favor for Hrothgar's past kindness
His deed had been well met
His duty to this great lord was done
But Beo would not, could not, abandoned Hrothgar
He had come to end a blood feud
To settle an old score
To end debt and nightmares with one blow
So now he would chance fate to give Hrothgar peace
Beo knew the price, saw that such choices seldom ended well
But the weave was set, fate had bound him
If he was to serve his lord, he must face the evil dam
This blood feud must find an end

It was his debt to go in place of the king
Thus did Beo and his men join Hrothgar
Followed the trail of pain
To the swamps, whose depths none knew
Where demons swam, desiring flesh
To satisfy their needs
Here they found Aeschere's head, mounted
Dead eyes staring back
Body ripped away, flesh gnawed
Old Hrothgar desired vengeance
It is here, Hrothgar cried, that hell's bitch doth hide
Like her child before her
Her stench covers you like a plague

Beo dismounted his heavy dark steed
Took his sword in hand

For this time he would face this demon
With all that he could take with him
For he knew not what magic she possessed
He vowed to swim to the depths of hell's door
To give his own life, to end this blood feud
To give Hrothgar peace

Then did one of the Danish warriors,
Unferth
A faithful servant of Hrothgar
Who had before questioned Beo's boast
Did now offer him his own sword,
Hrunting
A legendary sword of hand twisted steel
Hammer forged blade, hardened by blood
The bite of the blade had never failed
This Unferth offered with no wine-words
To gather his earlier spite
He now saw Beo was a man of his word
Whose bravery went without question
Beo accepted the sword with sincere thanks
Told Unferth that with such a tested blade
He would surely overcome this wretched beast
Lastly he told Hrothgar
That if he did not return¹
To send his gifts back to his king
And to tell them that he had died well

Thus did Beo dive into the swamp
With sword in hand and armor firmly placed
He swiftly descended the depths of the murky waters
But in this land monsters hid in every shadow
Huge water dragons struck out at him
With mouths agape and claws striking
But Beo dispatched them easily
With sword blow he gutted them
One by one until he was alone

Or so he thought
A huge hand from beneath him

Unseen because of the murky waters
Wrapped around his ankle like a vise
Pulled him down like a rag doll
Into the depths of the swamp
Beo struggled to be free
Tried to strike out at the invisible hand
But deeper and deeper they went
Into the mire of this foul gloom
No matter how he struck or struggled
The demon's grasp could not be broken
As if caught in a powerful current
He could not break free
Then downward he went
Keeping his air held within
Deeper and deeper
The murk swallowed him
Till finally they found the bottom

Still dragging Beo by his leg
His capturer pulled him into a dark recess
A cave at the bottom of the swamp
And out of the water he was tossed
Onto the hard ancient rock that shaped the hidden room
But Beo had no time to inspect his whereabouts
For the foul demon fell on him with a vengeance
Her cruel face filled his vision
It was Grendel's mother
The bitch from hell itself

One monstrous hand wrapped itself around Beo's neck
The other pounded her huge claws into his chest
The strike so powerful that it drove the air
From Beo's chest like a hammer
But his chain mail resisted the long pointed daggers
That dangled from the tips of her powerful hand, like knives
Infuriated that her strike drew no blood
She pounded Beo's chest again and again
And yet the his armor held
She howled piteously at her failure

Never before had Beo seen such monstrous hate
Her black eyes could have bored a hole in him
Hate so complete had he not even seen in Grendel eyes
For Grendel had come to merely master man
His greed for power had darkened his soul
But this ancient dam's soul was so filled with malice
That he had never seen the like before

Then in her frustration she picked Beo up
Held him above her head with the ease of a child
Tossed him across the dimly lit cave to the sword studded wall
Beo's body pounded the wall and bounced against the earth
He struggled to his feet finally free of her cruel grasp
Raised the sword Hrunting and attacked her as she charged
This ancient blade singed the air with powerful strokes
Again and again he struck her but the sword did not bite
She wrenched the sword from his grasp
Tossed it away laughing
Then she struck him so hard that he bounded off the wall
The force of the strike knocking one of her swords from its place
Fell across his bruised body

It was a sword unlike any he had ever seen
The blade dark like blood
Covered in runes that had been etched by giants of old
Giants who it was once said had great magic in their day
The long handle bore designs of dragons fighting
When he took the sword in his grasp
He felt a surge of power he had never known
He rose to his feet sword in hand
He had thought because it was nearly as long, as he tall
That the sword would be unbalanced, difficult to use
But it was light, lighter than Hrunting
Felt right in his grasp

He looked to Grendel's Dam and raised the sword
And when he did he saw fear in her eyes
He swung at her and she dodged the singing blade
She jumped back, fear glazed her blood red eyes
Now she was desperately trying to avoid him

He charged her and she leaped across the cave
Again and Again he struck at her
But now fear filled those cruel eyes
The sword danced through the air like a fire brand
Humming and scouring the air with every stroke
He backed her against a far wall
Trapped, she hissed and growled
She did not believe that he could kill her
She was ancient beyond man's reckoning
Her magic most foul
Thus she charged him and Beo was ready
The sword sang, like a blaze of fire
That ancient sword stung the air
Singed it with its heat
Slipped past her neck like hot honey
She faltered; a disbelieving look filled her eyes
Then did her head slide
Off
Fell from her grotesques shoulders
Clanged to the ground like an empty shell
And her body followed
The dam was dead

Beo searched the cave
Within he found riches he had never seen before
Gold and silver laced the floor of the den
Swords, knives, chalices, rings, necklaces
Littered the ground wherever he walked
Ages of hate she had collected
Blood covered tokens he would not touch
Then in a hidden chamber
He found Grendel's butchered body
With this ancient sword
He struck Grendel's head off
To prove that he had ended this blood feud
But when the deed was done the blade of this sword
Melted away like hot butter and only the handle remained

So it was that Beo returned
But when he found the surface

Only his warriors remained
Hrothgar and his men had returned to Herot
For all believed, even Beo's men, that Beo had perished
But his warriors would not abandon their leader
They waited and prayed to the great father
That he would be victor
That he would return
And thus their prayers were answered
So such was their joy when Beo did enter
Heorot
His thanes carrying Gendel's head on a post between him

The joy that night would never be equaled
In Hrothgar's hall, Heorot
The scop sang and played the lyres
Told great stories of great warriors
Then did Hrothgar praise Beo achievements
Sung his own song of praise for Beo's victory
He told Beo that one day he too would be a king
For truly he was of worthy blood
A noble warrior who valued faith and justice
He warned Beo also
Told the tale of King Heremod

A Danish king of old was Heremod
Once a kind king
Who rewarded his warriors with gold and silver
He was loved and honored by his men
They served him well granting him great victories
But age and unwatchful eyes
Let his spirit wonder
Evil slipped through an open door
Greed took hold of his heart
He stopped giving out gold
Horded all that he had
Would not give out gold bracelets to his warriors
Gave no joy in his hall
Though it was built on their blood
His pride took its toll
Struck him to the ground

Robbed him of his glory
When death finally took him
And fires consumed him
His shell split open like an empty hull
Thus a once proud warrior and king
Suffered a cruel and wretched death
Through his own hands

These words did Beo take to heart
Promised Hrothgar his wisdom would be hoarded

That he would not fall to the grasp
Of pride or greed
For Beo did not seek such lofty heights
He did not seek power only truth

And so with much sadness
Beo and his men slipped the shores of Hrothgar
The old king cried for he knew he would not lay eyes
On this faithful warrior again in his lifetime
The great dragon prow ship now heavy
With gold, silver and gifts
Worthy of a king
Sunk low into the water as it slid away

The proud dragon prow danced in the air
Once again ready to stretch its cloth wings
To pit its wooden torso against the bounding waves
On the dancing waters that whale's did glide
Like a bird about to fly
It gathered the wind, tasted the air
Shook out and stretched like a new born
Breathed in the fine salt water of life
And like the fabled ancient beast
Slid away towards the distant shorelines
And home

Beowulf found fame and fortune
Upon his return to Geatland

He gave Queen Wealtheow gift
Of the necklace
To Hyalec's Queen
So that Beo might honor her
Her face glowed with awe at the sight of the priceless gift
His name would now forever be associated with hero of old
His king and queen gave banquet in his name
Showered Beo and his men with more gifts
Yet Beo still remained humble
Despite the glory given him
Gave praise for his men who stood by him
Sang of their courage, devotion
Openly he professed his love for the great father
He knew that the Lord of Lords had granted his victory
His boundless strength only a sign of his search for goodness
Honored he accepted their gifts
Remained a loyal subject
Served his King and Queen
Till fate turned his hand

When one day he would attain
The Throne meant for him
Sit upon that glorious seat of power
Guide his people through peace and war
King he would be

End part 2

Part 3

The Dragon's Horde

Beowulf's crown weighed heavy on his brow
So it had for 50 years passed
Warrior and chieftain he served his people
Faithfully he protected them
Made safe their shores
Drove enemies from his land

Many fought and died at his side
His legend had grown
He seemed immortal

Beo's path had not been easy
But he had been true to his heart
Faithful to his spirit
Though he had been offered the crown
Upon Hyalec's death
By his widowed queen
He had refused
Gave way to the rightful heir
Hyelec's son , Heardred
But fate had other plans
Betrayal took the young kings life

With no other living descendant
Beo accepted the throne
Took power amongst the Geats
Swore to be faithful, just
And so he was, to his dying day
True to his heart
Faithful to his spirit
Yet fate had set his end
Made a place for his grave

It began with a thief, a slave
escaped from his master
driven by fear and a brutal storm
he found a burrow most ancient
for safety
he had begun to doubt his desire for freedom
gave thought to going back
but his master would beat him
might even kill him
but in the burrow that all changed
some would say it was fate
that drew him there
others might say it was chance
but the Geat's did not believe in chance

the fates had woven their lives beforehand
so it was when the terrified slave
entered the ancient the dark burrow
seeking safety, seeking an answer
but in this ancient chamber
he found more than he had bargained for
within the burrow lay a horde of gold
an ancient warriors tomb,
a king of great wealth
unlike any he had seen before
but more than the dead protected this horde
for upon it lay a great worm, a dragon
it slept, spread out over the pile precious metals
its huge claws grasping, legs resting
long slithering neck encrusted
monstrous head breathing, bulbous nostrils flaring
wings spread like a cover over the tall pile of gold
stealthily the thief neared the edge of the pile of gold
a great golden cup lay loosely at the edge
no claw nor flesh of the dragon touch it
quietly he picked it up, stole it
slipped out, headed for home
his life now bought, maybe even his freedom

but what he did not understand
was that the dragon knew every item in that horde
long he had lain there undisturbed
for three hundred years the gold had been his bed
dragons loved their gold, hoarded it
it became like an outer skin to him
he knew every jewel, every cup, every coin, every necklace
it had become like flesh to him
and so when he awoke
he knew he had been vandalized
that a chalice was missing
and the dragon who had slept hundreds of years

Filled with bitter hate for the theft
furious at his loss it took revenge

In the night, covered in darkness
The mighty dragon came forth
with monstrous wings and giant claws
mouth agape and fire spitting
he attack the local villages
burned all alive
destroyed crops and livestock
poisoned their water
and then

The demon poured flames upon Beo's Mead Hall
Melted walls and throne with searing heat
Burned it to cinders till nothing remained
Bereft of his Hall and the heart of the kingdom
Beo feared he had anger the Maker
Searched his soul for an answer
Wondered why evil now haunted his door step

Why for the demon attacked
For the wits of a dragon no one knew
Yet then did the truth of the matter come forth
The master of the slave
Realized their folly
Brought the slave before the king
Displayed the stolen artifact
Beo now knew that the dragons wrath
Could not be kindled
Only one path could end this vile attack

Beo seemed to sense
the truth of the matter
you could kill a monster
But you could never be rid of them
they haunted your shadows
Lay wait in your paths
Seeking to test your heart
your soul

Beo ordered a giant iron shield to be wrought
Shaped to guard him against heat and flames
Then he gathered his Thanes to him
And took the slave as guide
For none knew where this Burrow lay hid
Where the Dragon slept when the sun warmed the earth
The small troop marched singing songs of war and hero's
Till finally to the dragons lair did the slave led them
On the shore a cliff rose and within the burrow

Then with his thanes gathered he reminisced of former times
Of Grendel and his mother of battles fought and won
He recalled bitter times as a youth
His reminisced about King Hrethel
Who had taken Beo as a youth to train him
What a fine leader he was
A good man at heart
But then one son accidentally killed the other
In a hunting accident
Hrethel was bitter for his loss
Grief swallowed him up to his life
Hyalec was also Hrethel son
Eventually the throne came to him

Many wonders had Beo seen in his lifetime
The great-spirit had truly blessed him
But life is a series of challenges
And his fate was written long ago
He would face the dragon
Knowing that death could be his end
But he would face it bravely
As all things he had done

Beo forbade any man to fight his battles
He would face this demon
Alone
But this time with shield, sword and armor
He bid his men fare the well
Descended down the crag to the cave below
The burrow was ringed by ancient stone columns

Within the hated night flayer heat simmered
Beo called out to the Dragon to come forth
To do battle and meet his fate
Swelling with Fury the dragon came forth
Spewing its foul flame to sear Beo's flesh
Beo's great iron shield tossed back the demons fire
But heat and flame kept Beowulf trapped behind his wall of iron
Beo danced with shield and sword
Seeking a moment to strike the fire monger
To finally silence this monstrous horror
The dragon twisted and slithered
Striking out with claw and fang
Tried to outsmart this warrior of many battles
Then did Beo strike hard with Naegling
With all his strength he drove his sword
To pierce ancient flesh of this ancient beast
But Naegling could not pierce that demons flesh
Ancient scales hardened by time and battles
Kept Naegling from piercing his flesh
Again and again he struck with all his force
Trying to drive Naegling deep into the demons heart
But with each blow his ancient treasure sword
Bit less and less, forcing Beo to retreat behind massive shield

Upon seeing Beo unable to best the demon
His warriors ran to the woods
For safety
For if the legendary strength of their hall king
Could not bite flesh and bone
With his mighty hews
Then their feeble swords would be wasted

That is all except Wiglaf
He held firm his fear
Remembered how his chieftain
Had given his thanes valued gifts
Praised their bravery and worthiness
He had shared mead and meat
With them in his great hall

Treated them as equals
Chosen them above all others

Wiglaf chose to go to his chieftain's aid
Felt shame for those whose fear had devoured
He would honor his good name
And not cheapen it
Wiglaf , Weohstan's son-child
Remembered his father's, father's
Whose blood poured through his veins
Warriors of old who never shrank from duty nor fight
Whose blood had slaked battlefields
Whose swords had blazed red hot against battle ready foe's
Now with ancient blood sword in hand
He swiftly came to his hearth masters side
Prepared to face death if the Fates tapestry so weaved

With sword and shield held high
Wiglaf cried out to Beowulf
That he would share sword swings
With his stout hearted king
That he would battle that ancient dragon
Stand in that fire-fury
At his Lords side
Thus with Linden wood shield and Eanmund's weapon
He stepped into the dragon spear of flame
Felt the full fury and wrath of serpents hate

The demons fire consumed his Linden wood shield
Seared Wiglaf's coat of mail
Burnished his helm of iron
Quickly he fell behind Beo's great shield
For the wrath of dragon fire
Swiftly changed his tactics
But he did not run nor hide
The weave had been set
His fate already determined
His Hearth Lord smiled at him
Renewed with strength and faith

He once again struck hard
His trophy sword plunged deep the dragons massive neck
Biting flesh and bone
Sinking Naegling deep past hardened flesh
Striking bone deep within
But the twisted steel of Naegling
Shuddered under blistering impact
And what could not, should not happen
Did
Naegling broke as Beo tried to remove it
Leaving only a broken shard in his mighty grasp

With bale fire searing shield and flesh
Blinding Beowulf with belching hot flame
The demon struck with venomous teeth
As fast as a slithering snake
Poured poison into Beo's bared neck
This legend that no man could quail
Staggered back from this deadly blow
Quickly the poison bit deep
The demon thought that he had won
But Wiglaf moved fast while demon hate seethed
Unseen he slipped beneath raised belly
Drove Eanmund's battle tested hard edged sword
Deep into the black flesh
Striking the hate driven heart with all his strength

Ancient hall hater bellowed mightily
Monstrous gaping mouth cried with death blow
Blood poured like a river from gaping wound
Beowulf still with presence of mind
Drew his trusted short sword
And as the demon struggled for last breaths
Beo hacked into ring bones of slithering neck
With all his remaining strength that ancient hall king
Separated ring bones from ring bones
Till the Dragons head fell lifeless
From his massive body
And then did Beo also fall

Never to rise up again

Wiglaf was quickly by his king's side
Saw the death wound
Knew that Beo's fate was sealed
Then upon Beowulf request
Wiglaf pillaged the Dragons horde
To his dying king he brought chalices of silver
Rust laden arm bracelets, sword struck helmets
And a wondrous gold banner and much more

Wiglaf laid this gold horde at his kings feet
But found his king struggling at deaths door
Seared and wound weary, bordered in darkness
Beo looked upon the treasure that his blood had bought
A grim smile touched his battle worn face
He thanked young Wiglaf for his courage and strength
Handed Wiglaf his collar of gold, named him the last of his clan
Commanded him to watch over his people and protect them as he had
Beo made one last request with pressing breath
To build him a burrow on high, near where balefire consumed him
Where all seafarers could see
Where mighty king and blood bought treasure did lie
Then did his ancient Hall-lord, ring thane giver, throne warden
Slip the bonds of earth, his spirit free at last
To walk the halls of shadow-land
Beside kin who had preceded him
Then did the other thanes of Beowulf

Who had come to fight alongside their Lord
But had hidden in the heat of battle
Whilst Beowulf and Wiglaf had fought fire monger
Came now to their Hall Lords side
Looked down at ancient hero, now safe in deaths arms
Mourned their Throne king death
But Wiglaf scorned them mightily
In past they had taken their Throne Wardens gifts
Eaten at his table, drank his mead and sworn their allegiance
And in his time of need where bravery counted most
They had run like cowards, hidden like children

Whilst their King, though ancient in years
Had bravely faced the demon
From hence forth they would be called cowards
Their chance at glory gone forever
They would be marked and rejected
Never to enter a kings hall again

Now Wiglaf sent word to Beo's waiting people
That their most precious lord was dead
He forewarned them that once it was known
Their shores would be soon raided
For Beowulf's fame had kept enemy's at bay
For many a year he had kept them safe

Wiglaf ordered his men to bring forth the hard earned horde
This they heaped onto a waiting wagon
Till wheels and axels groaned with the weight
Riches seldom seen or imagined
Gleamed and shown in suns light
This they took to Hronesnaess point
The Dragon was pushed over the cliff

Sent to its resting place upon crushing waves
Where earth and water would reclaim this ancient beast
Not only did this day a great king did die
But a beast unmatched in power and fury
Had met its end
Two great legends had found their end
together

The blood won fortune was taken
Piled high around their kings lifeless form
The balefire was lit
And Beowulf spirit was sent forward
Released from the grasp of earth
Never to return
The balefire reached high into the sky
Blazing gloriously the death call of a great king
The fire burned with fury , consuming
All within its boundary, melting gold and the kings heart

Turning them into one
Fire spent
A great mound was built
More gold was piled high amongst his ashes
The people cried and warriors bowed heads
Mourned the loss of so great a Throne Warden
They all knew not another of his like would they see
An age had passed
And the likes of it would never be seen again.

**Thus End the Tale of My Most Ancient Lord and King Beowulf
His Story has been Retold**

END

Afterward: My version obviously doesn't cover the entire tale. There is a lot more that I chose not to include in order to keep the story as simple and direct as possible. If you liked this then read some of the fabulous translations that are available. My personal favorite is a verse translation by Frederick Rebsamen. It is a very easy to read translation that even sounds good when read aloud. If you want an artsy translation I would suggest Seamus Heaney version of Beowulf. Another favorite is written by Rosemary Sutcliff if you can find a copy it's worth it.

Gary Whitaker The Storyman

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