

True standards of a hero

Literature, British Literature



True Standards of a Hero George Washington, Marilyn Monroe, Muhammad Ali, and even Taylor Swift have been proven to be heroes in today's culture. Long before any of these individuals walked the Earth, the story of a man exhibiting what a true hero of epic proportions really is. Beowulf, a poem in British literature from the eighth century, showcases the concept of real heroism. Beowulf, a Geat who provides the real qualities of a dominate hero, travels to Herot to protect the kingdom of King Hrothgar. Beowulf will find himself battling with monsters that represent evil, the devil, and depths of Hell. The people of the kingdom are, at first, nervous of having a man fight the monster, Grendel, but are soon proven that Beowulf is the only option. The hero will later encounter the monster's mother and, fifty years later, a dominate dragon. Clearly, in Beowulf, we will see the true qualities of an epic hero. Beowulf will travel far distances to be glorified and viewed significantly by the entire world. He will also demonstrate Anglo-Saxon ethics in the deeds he performs using his superhuman strength and abilities. Beowulf proves to people across many lands that he is a strong and responsible leader as well as an example of true heroism. As the poem begins, you immediately see how Beowulf is presented with an intense quest and is signified and glorified. The reader is told how a horrific monster, Grendel, is attacking Hrothgar's kingdom. Beowulf hears of the incidents and immediately travels to help. He wants to aid the kingdom, " Heard how Grendel filled night with horror/ And quickly commanded a boat fitted out/ Proclaiming that he'd go to that famous king" (112-114). He then carries out with his promise and takes on the outstanding quest. Beowulf carries out another epic quality by being significant and glorified across many lands.

When he arrives at Herot, he is greeted by Wulfgar, one of Hrothgar's feudal lords. Wulfgar proclaims, " My lord, the great King of the Danes, commands me/ To tell you that he knows of your noble birth" (127-128). This explains how highly regarded Beowulf is talked of among the area. Beowulf will, now, battle Grendel, the ferocious beast. In addition to the obvious heroic qualities, Beowulf showcases his ethics to Anglo-Saxon society and his superhuman strength. When Beowulf goes to fight the monster, he refuses to use weapons since Grendel doesn't use them. " That I, alone and with the help of my men,/ May purge all evil from this hall. I have heard,/ Too, that the monster's scorn of men/ Is so great that he needs no weapons and fears no name./ Nor will I" (165-169), announces Beowulf in order to prove his pride and morality. Now, though, Beowulf must give attention to showing his superhuman strength. He fights upon one arm, being able to detach Grendel's own arm. "-And was instantly seized himself, claws/ Bent back as Beowulf leaned up on one arm" (430-431). As to be expected, Beowulf murders Grendel within moments of the battle. Grendel's mother is then angered by the news and is ready to fight Beowulf as well. Beowulf is, once again, prepared to risk death for glory, the citizens, and to reflect ideals of society. He jumps into the red, dark, deep, treacherous waters to confront Grendel's mother in a battle. " The water was bloody, steaming and boiling/ In horrible pounding waves, heat/ Sucked from his magical veins" (529-531). Once arriving miles deep into the Hell, Beowulf was ready to boost his name once again. " But Beowulf/ Longed only for fame, leaped back/ Into battle... If weapons were useless he'd use/ His hands, the strength in his fingers. So fame/ Comes to those who mean to win it/ And care about nothing else"

(605-612). This is how Beowulf reflects ideals of Anglo-Saxon society. He knows fame comes to those who thrive for it. Our hero wins the incredible battle and returns to the surface with the head of Grendel's mother. In Herot, Beowulf is presented the kingdom and is now the King. Fifty years later, a new crisis comes forward. A dragon is destroying the king's land; Beowulf is the only known help. The king travels with twelve men, but shows his bravery by telling them to " Wait for me close by, my friends,/... no man but me/ Could hope to defeat this monster" (679-684). Beowulf wants to go in alone, to protect his men. While in battle, all of the men leave except for one, Wiglaf, a distant cousin to Beowulf. The highly admired hero, is defeated by the dragon. Wiglaf runs to his side, where Beowulf proclaims him as his successor. Moments after, Beowulf takes his final breath. Beowulf was clearly seen as a strong leader by his people carrying on his name in glory, " And so Beowulf's followers/ Rode, mourning their beloved leader,/ Crying that no better king had ever/ Lived, no prince so mild, no man/ so open to his people, so deserving of praise" (838-842). There was even a tower erected in his name. His legacy of being an epic, strong, glorious leader is achieved. Obviously, Beowulf has association with every heroic quality under the Sun. The king was on a quest, was significant, and even glorified by his people. Beowulf additionally showed ethics in his battles and his superhuman abilities. He risks death carrying out ideals of Anglo-Saxon society performing these great deeds with even greater leadership. This poem clearly represented God versing evils with the good prevailing. Now we see how today's heroes find their inspiration.