

Beowulf and everyman

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Everyman and Beowulf have many differences and few similarities. The epic poem Beowulf shows bravery and honor when confronted by death. He is ready for he knows that death will happen eventually.

Whereas Everyman, Everyman is very hesitant to accept death. Everyman feels like he needs more time and does not want to confront death. This essay will prove by examining the characteristics of both literature pieces one will come to understand that death does not wait to be called upon. This paper will center on three of the following scenes slay of Grendel, the approach of death in Everyman, and the acceptance of death within both stories.

In the epic poem Beowulf, Beowulf travels to Herot to help Hrothgar get rid of Grendel. God, in His mercy, has sent him to save us, so springs my hope from Grendels assaults. For his great courage, Ill load him with gifts! Make haste now, marshall the men into the hall, and give them welcome to Danish grounds (lines 369-373). Hrothgar is delighted to encounter Beowulf once again. Hrothgar mentions that he knew Beowulfs father Ecgtheow. Hrothgar believes that after he helped Ecgtheow all that time ago his son found his way back to a faithful friend. Beowulf wants to help Hrothgar because he himself have heard the many stories of the monster Grendel and the great evil he has casted.

I slew the nicors that swam the sea, Avenged the woe they have caused the Weders, and ended their evil- they needed a lesson! And now with Grendel, the fearful fiend, single handed Ill settle the strife!(lines 407-411). Beowulf boasts about the many people he has killed that have reigned havoc on

others and will do the same here in Herot to Grendel. Beowulf understands that his bravery can lead to his death but he must take on the challenge to convey this type of heroism and show others that he is Beowulf the great. If death shall call me, hell carry away There'll be little need for my body Fate goes as fate must! (lines 430-438). Beowulf is successful when slaying Grendel for death has not come for it is not his time.

In Everyman, Everyman is confronted by Death without any warning. Everyman says Full unready I am such reckoning to give. I know thee not (lines 113-114). When looking back into Beowulf, Beowulf's readiness of death is completely different from Everyman's. Beowulf understands that death will happen and Everyman does not understand why it is happening so quickly. Death in Everyman responds I am death that no man dreadeth, for every man I rest, and no man spareth; for it is Gods commandment (lines 115-117). Both stories exemplify the strength of the characters. Beowulf confronts evil as he comes in contact with it. Whereas Everyman is forced to confront death. Everyman is not brave as Beowulf he does not take on a heroic stand. Instead he is placed in a position where he has no choice.

The many characters in Everyman's story help guide him to the next. As Everyone encounters each character he wants them to come on this journey with him. My Kinsmen promised me faithfully for to abide with steadfastly; And know fast away do they flee. (lines 380-383). Everyman speaks saying that his friends that promised their loyalty has left him to continue his own. This shows that Everyman is his own villain in a way. Everyman must go

alone and face his will. No one made Death appear but Everyone himself so it becomes harder to face the fact of his own wrong doing.

Beowulf likewise Everyone is his own villain. He so prided in fighting the evil that he himself is in danger each time he does. After Beowulf is crowned king he hears that a thief has taken treasure from the dragon. The dragon is now breathing fire at the people, it is now up to Beowulf to once again confront death. The ruler of the Geats had no reason to boast his unsheathed iron, his excellent sword, had weakened (lines 238-240). Beowulf was losing the fight against the dragon. All the warriors that was fighting with him left him but one stayed and his name is Wiglaf. As they defeated the fire breathing dragon they killed the dragon. The wounds of battle grievous and grim full well he weened that his life was ended, and all the joy of his years on earth; That his days were done, and Death was most near (lines 2576-2579).

Beowulf was wounded in the process and knew at this moment he was going to die. Beowulf fought for what was right and his death symbolized the traits that Anglo- Saxon warrior culture held in the highest regard. In Everyman, Everymans soon becomes keened that the qualities he most valued attend to him in his death. Into thy hands, Lord my soul commend; Receive it Lord, that it be not lost. As thou me boughtest, so me defend, and save me from the fiends boasts, that I may appear with that blessed host That shall be saved at the day of doom (lines 880-885).

Everyman eventually realizes through his pilgrimage that he is essentially alone, despite all the personified characters and friends to him. Everyman learns that when you are brought to death and placed before God, all you

have left is your own good deeds.

Death is no different in Beowulf than Everyman. Death teaches in both no matter how fulfilling your life may still feel like you need time. Each time Beowulf stepped out to fight a battle against those who brought evil he knew that death was an option. Beowulf takes on the role of a modern hero while defending the Danish Geats.

Unlike Beowulf, Everymans purpose refers to his mediocre life on earth. These unique roles from Beowulf and Everyman allow both characters to portray a certain demeanor. Death is inevitable and while both has its run ins with Death they both put strain on the importance of acceptance of it.