

Essay on beowulf

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



Beowulf is an epic Greek poem based on a great hero named Beowulf. It is a universal story of a life's journey from adolescence to old age. Beowulf is revealed as the hero of the people for saving them from the monster Grendel and his mother and in his last battle with the dragon, a new hero appears. Wiglaf appears to be the new hero at the end of the poem after he was able to help his lord in fighting the dragon. Wiglaf assumed his heroic role when he remained courageously loyal to Beowulf his lord. When the dragon's scorching breath scared off the other men and drove them away and it was evident that it was a huge disadvantage to Beowulf, he stood courageously with Beowulf to the end, he never ran away. He was there with his lord to help him fight and conquer the enemy of the land because that was the reason why he was a warrior in the battlefield at that time. Wiglaf was the only brave warrior who stood courageously and bravely with Beowulf in the fight against the dragon. Just like Beowulf, Wiglaf was courageous, strong, brave and became the hero of the people.

Wiglaf is depicted as a unimportant character in the epic poem, however he plays a fundamental role at the end of the poem. He was a young lad, fearless, courageous, strong and a loyal warrior who had never been in the battle before. But, he was able to step forward while others retreated to save his lord, hero and cousin at a time of peril. This is the time he proved himself to be a worthy successor to Beowulf because he was even willing to die as long as he does not live Beowulf alone in the fight. He was more than willing to save his lord. At the scene of the skirmishes with the dragon, Wiglaf was able to display his heroic traits by not retreating but fighting to the end with his lord. He had never been significant in the poem until this time when he

got an opportunity to prove his worth to his lord and the people of the land. The author says “ And now the youth was to enter the line of battle with his lord, his first time to be tested as a fighter” (Heaney 177). In this act, he proved himself that he can be a good fighter and Beowulf’s successor. In addition, Wiglaf stood out to give an arousing speech to his comrades after they retreated when the dragon seemed dangerous. He rebuked them for not fighting for their king and the people of the land thus failing to fulfill their duties and services as warriors to the people. After rebuking them for their actions he joined Beowulf in the battle alone fearlessly. When the dragon’s fangs got into Beowulf’s neck, he stood courageously and plunged the dragon with his sword causing it fall on the ground thus saving his lord Beowulf. The two were able to kill the dragon, Wiglaf dressed Beowulf’s wounds and at his last breath, Beowulf gave Wiglaf his armor declaring him king of all geats. Beowulf is heard declaring to Wiglaf “ You are the last of us, the only one left of the Waegmundings” (Heaney 189). He became the king of the land because of courageous act of helping the king fight the dragon. Wiglaf’s life took a turn around as he took Beowulf’s place as king. Initially, he was non-existent but after assuming his hero’s role by fighting with Beowulf to the end, he became a great hero of the land and the king’s successor on the throne. His fight for the king proved that he was the only worthy successor for the king as the other men backed away from the war. Wiglaf put Beowulf above himself and dressed him stooping to obligations which look far below the duties of a thane. He assumed his role as the people’s leader and was able to confront the men who retreated from the battle against the dragon and left Beowulf alone when he was in dire need of

them. He later honored Beowulf's funeral wishes and took his position as the king and the hero of the land.

In the poem, Beowulf appeared to be the people's leader and hero but as it concludes, he is replaced by a new hero, Wiglaf. Just like Beowulf, the new hero was brave, valiant, strong and courageous and that is why he was able to fight with him until they won their last battle against the dragon. Beowulf and Wiglaf shared the same qualities and during the scene with the dragon, he proved to be a worthy successor to Beowulf. He took over from Beowulf as king and the leader of the people because he deserved it.

Works Cited

Heaney, Seamus. *Beowulf: Verse Translation* (Norton Critical Editions). New York: Norton, 2002. Print.