

Courage of beowulf



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the epic Beowulf courage is an on going theme that is shown throughout the entire story. By definition courage is the state or quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger, fear, or vicissitudes on ones own will and determination. There are many things from the epic that could be used to prove this statement, but I chose to use the section entitled " The Final Battle." In this section there are two great speeches given by both Beowulf and Wiglaf. I believe that in both of these monologues courage is portrayed by the two warriors, and it is easy to see why.

In Section 14, lines 674-685 Beowulf says,

".... I feel no shame, with shield and sword and armor, against this monster: when he comes to me I mean to stand, not to run from his shooting flames, stand till fate decides which one of us wins. My heart is firm, my hands calm: I need no hot words. Wait for me close by, my friends. We shall see, soon, who will survive this bloody battle, stand when the fighting is done. No one else could do what I mean to, here, no man but me could hope to defeat this monster. No one could try..."

Now, this passage pretty much explains Beowulf's courage without an interpretation, but for the sake of argument I will interpret it for you. Beowulf is saying that he has no fear in fighting this monster, because he means to stand and not run. He says that his heart is firm and his hands are calm, meaning again that he is not scared because he isn't shaking. Now for a man not to be scared even though his is about to meet his demise, that takes a lot of courage.

In Section 15, lines 771-790 Wiglaf says,

".... He meant to kill this monster himself, our mighty king, fight this battle

alone and unaided, as in the days when his strength and daring dazzled men's eyes. But those days are over and gone and our lord must lean on younger arms. And we must go to him, while angry flames burn at his flesh, help our glorious king! By almighty God I'd rather burn myself than see flames swirling around my lord. And who are we to carry home our shields before we've slain his enemy and ours, to run back to our homes with Beowulf so hard pressed here? I swear that nothing he ever did deserved an end like this, dying miserable and alone, butchered by this savage beast: we swore that these swords and armor were each for us all!..."

When Wiglaf is saying this to the rest of Beowulf's army when he is being killed by the dragon. The warriors are getting scared, because they are watching their king being butchered by this dragon, and they start to run away. Wiglaf sees them fleeing and tells them this. The point that he is trying to get across is that all of them swore allegiance to Beowulf when they joined his great army. So they must now prove their allegiance by helping their king when he is in trouble. Unfortunately, Wiglaf's powerful speech did nothing and he was the only one of the entire army to go to Beowulf's aid. Wiglaf demonstrated great courage just as Beowulf did, he went in facing the danger that unavoidably in front of him, but didn't care. He just knew that he had to save his king.

Both of these men resemble a character, from a movie that I saw quite recently. Braveheart is a movie about a man named William Wallace who leads a group of Scotsmen against the English who are trying to take their land. In one scene, the Scottish and English are stand on opposite sides of an open field. The Scottish are out match in every way, just like Beowulf and

Wiglaf. The English have a lot more men and a lot more weapons. Just before they are about to go into battle the Scottish are about to turn around and run away. Wallace notices this and he gives one of the most powerful speeches, I have ever heard. After the speech is delivered, the Scotsmen are so motivated that they engage with the English and actually defeat them, despite being out matched and lacking so much skill as warriors.

In conclusion, the powerful speeches given by both Beowulf and Wiglaf in "The Final Battle," displayed the unbelievable courage of the two great warriors. They more than support my statement that courage is an ongoing theme in the epic Beowulf. These two men resemble a hero in a modern day movie, acting under the exact same circumstances. The only difference being that Beowulf and Wiglaf were fighting a monster, and William Wallace was fight the English. However, in a way the English were in fact monsters, stealing the Scottish land, and killing who ever got in their way in the process.