

# Essay on concept synthesis: exploring the hero

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



Grendel is a character from the heroic epic poem Beowulf that is certainly worth remembering. Despite the ambiguity of his nature, Grendel, it seems that the emotions and impulses that drive him are vaguely human.

Therefore, considering vaguely human character traits that Grendel possesses, almost any 'human' hero with the right set of heroic qualities could defeat a monster like Grendel.

When Grendel first reveals himself and attacks the sleeping men at Heorot, which is King Hrothgar's mead-hall, the narrator of the poem claims that his motives are anger and envy of the nightly entertainment at the mead-hall, while he himself has to live in isolation. The lines " Then the mighty war-spirit<sup>1</sup> endured for a season,/ Bore it bitterly, he who bided in darkness," suggest that Grendel is bitterly envious of the Danemen's joy. Unlike Grendel, a hero according to Emerson " works in the voice of the great and good." Such wisdom tends to set a hero apart. Emerson also writes that a hero's mind is " of such balance that no disturbances can shake his will." Therefore, a hero's motives are quite selfless, he fights for the greater good, and since a hero would use his wisdom to guide him through a battle against a monster like Grendel, he would certainly emerge victorious.

Despite his grotesque, monstrous appearance, gigantic size and the supreme strength to defeat dozens of men, Grendel is nothing but a lowly coward. He continues to attack the guards at Heorot only at night, when they are drunken and asleep, weary and weak. As the narrator expresses, " He continues to attack the guards at Heorot only at night, when they are drunken and asleep, weary and weak." Trapping and tricking them. He trod every night then." According to Emerson, someone who is " heroic will

always find crises to try his edge.” Unlike Grendel, a hero who truly embodies the characteristic of bravery would be ready to face a monster like Grendel, head-on, regardless of the time of the day, and a hero would face such a monster without any fear because he would be willing to die, as Emerson claims that “[h]uman virtue demands her champions and martyrs.” In *Beowulf*, Grendel is portrayed as indifferent to human sorrows and pain, or perhaps he is incapable of feeling the pain and sorrow of the men he drags and devours night after night. As the narrator claims that “sorrow the heroes,/Misery knew not,” but Grendel just could stand seeing these people seemingly happy, and without caring about the pain and sorrow he would cause them, he set out to make their lives miserable. Emerson describes a genuine hero as persistent. He adds that if a genuine hero sees it fit to serve his fellow men, then he should do so without any expectations. Therefore, when fighting a monster like Grendel, a genuine hero would not expect anything in return, his sole motive would be to serve the troubled people and rid them of their sorrow.

Finally, Grendel appears to be very resentful because of his belief that God does not bless a monster like him with happiness and joy like he does the men in the mead-hall, who celebrate there every night. Emerson makes it apparent that a hero needs to be brave and willing to become a “martyr,” but it Emerson’s text probably also implies that a hero’s belief that God is always in control is one of his main sources of bravery.

Thus, a hero who possesses traits such as these that common everyday people often lack, a hero would easily defeat a monster like Grendel, considering his flawed character traits.

## **Works Cited**

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