

Beowulf

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



Though the code of chivalry was defined in the stories of “ King Arthur” it can be argued that Beowulf was upholding the code hundreds of years earlier. The Code of Chivalry is the ideal standard behavior that all good knights follow. 3 elements showed by the code of Chivalry are courage, defend those who can't defend themselves, and loyalty to the king. Beowulf illustrates these elements of the code by fighting several monsters, including Grendel, by sailing to the land of the Danes to fight for Hrothgar, and he returns to his kind Hygelan, with treasures. Following the Code of Chivalry was important to the warriors of Beowulf's time because it helped unify them behind a just cause. One of the element of the code of Chivalry illustrated by Beowulf was courage. Beowulf proved to be courageous many times throughout the course of the poem. One example of Beowulfs courage is when he battles Grendel. Grendel is “ a demon grim” who has terrorized king Hrothgars kingdom for 12 years. When Beowulf hears of Hrothgars troubles he sails to the land of the Danes to help. Beowulf shows his courage by choosing to fight Grendel with his hands only. Beowulf said “ With hand grip only I'll grapple with Grendel/ foe against foe I'll fight to the death” (lines 342-343) This was courageous of Beowulf because he puts his life on the line. As a result of the fight Beowulf tears Grendels arm off, which brought some relief to Hrothgars Kingdom. Another element of the Code of Chivalry that Beowulf upholds is Defending those who cant defend themselves. Beowulf proves to his audience that he is capable of not only defending himself but also others. Beowulf Defeats Grendel who is coercive toward the people of Hrothgars kingdom. No man was willing to step up and fight Grendel after the 12 year attacks on Heorot in the land of the Danes. Everyone was traumatized after

Grendel's attacks, and in sorrow and mourning. Beowulf however decides to defend the people and fight Grendel. Beowulf tears Grendel's arm from his body at the shoulder and Grendel runs to his home in the marshes to die. The author describes Grendel's feelings " Every bone in his body / quailed and recoiled, but he could not escape. /He was desperate to flee to his den and hide/ with the devil's litter, for in all his days /he had never been clamped or cornered like this. "(lines 749-756) Beowulf's defeat over Grendel brings peace, and relief to Hrothgar's kingdom and they can finally live lives without terror. The Third of the five elements of the Code of Chivalry is Loyalty to the king. Beowulf stays loyal to his own king Hygelac and keeps his promises. Before Beowulf set out on his journey to the land of the Danes to help king Hrothgar and his people, he promises his king Hygelac that he will return, after he has defeated Grendel. After Beowulf fights Grendel and overcomes other obstacles that he is faced with along the way, he stays true to the promise he made and returns home. He however does not return to king Hygelac with empty hands. Beowulf received 12 treasures from king Hrothgar as a reward for defeating Grendel. Beowulf does not keep the treasures, but instead he gives them to his king Hygelac. It is said " The cup was carried to him, kind words / spoken in welcome and a wealth of wrought gold /graciously bestowed: two arm bangles,/ a mail-shirt and rings, and the most resplendent / torque of gold I ever heard tell of / anywhere on earth or under heaven. " (1191-1196) This shows tremendous loyalty, and humbleness because he kept his promise and returned to his king, and gave up all his treasures instead of keeping them to himself. Beowulf perfectly illustrates how one is able to uphold the Code of Chivalry.

Beowulf was Courageous in battles, defended those who couldn't defend themselves, and loyal to his king. Beowulf's adherence to the code earns him deservedly respect as a great hero and leader.