

Alternate ending to Beowulf

Lines 2843

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“ To God, the King Eternal Throne-Holder, I sing my thanks. That you’ve let me look on this before I die, this gold, this get? It’s enough. My people lose me, but gain a hoard gift. Say that on the day of my dying, I went hard. I traded my life for this. It’s a good bargain. My god watch over my Geats. I’m going. Ere mine time to hie, I do lack to confess i hast not been the most righteous soldier. Mine own insecurities had gotten the meetest of me. I stand ere thou, mine kingdom, to claim mine wronging’s to all. it had been me all along terrorizing our kingdom. Grendel wished no harm yet to become respected and i had taken advantage of that. His own discretion was formed by the jealous man that stands ere thou all. He wasn’t right to be king, i was the meetest knight and it should’st hast been me to take over the throne. I let thou all receive these demonic actions because of mine own jealousy. The young sirrah was childlike and ‘twere time i brought that to justice. I was a descendent of cains clan. It had been me all along not grendel”

My goal for this assignment was to create an alternate ending for Beowulf. Towards the end of the book he is challenged to defend his kingdom by slaying the dragon. As he does so he gets injured during the battle. He gets bitten in the neck by the dragon and its fiery venom kills him. He relays his last words to Wiglaf as he knows that he is dying. His ending speech is a mix of prayer, instruction, and farewell. One of the lines that stood out to me the most during his speech was, “ I want it visible, towering like a giant’s tooth on Whales’ Cape, so my people know I was king, and so seafarers say my name daily, nightly call out “Beowulf’s Barrow”. This particular line sparked the idea of my alternative ending because it was very self absorbed. My opinion throughout the whole book was that Beowulf was a bit cocky. I believe many of the things he had accomplished was because he wanted to be seen as the hero not doing it for the safety of the kingdom. I don’t doubt that he wanted to keep all the people safe but I do believe there were some selfish tendencies he had. Lines 2740 state from Beowulf, “God cant call me a murderer, for I slew none of my kin.” It is almost ironic how Beowulf states he cannot be called a murderer for he was the one who slade Grendel and his mother. It almost sounds as though he doesnt count this as murder because they were threats to the community but killing another human being or in this case two, it should still be counted as murder. The more I read his ending speech the more self centered it is portrayed. He starts off by talking about gold and how when he dies his people get the gold the dragon had been protecting. His dying thoughts in my opinion were portrayed as receiving the gold was equivalent to his death. That he died but no one should be sad because they are receiving the gold. I also envisioned what a crazy plot twist

that would be if Beowulf did have some part in Cain. That this would have been the final discovery at the end of the book was he actually was evil and wanted the gold for himself. The whole time he was building up the narrative that he was this fantastic knight who wanted to serve the king and one day maybe even become the king. Maybe he was threatened by Grendel because he could see the power in him. That's why he gave him this false narrative of being evil and shunned him away to live in the swamps. We have also been aware that during this time period male masculinity played a big role in everything the men do. That they always want to be the best and the strongest. That their egos are very high which is why most of them battle to show their dominance. I enjoyed this reading as it was but I do think it would have been a very interesting alternative ending. I think with a couple of things changed around in the story it could have made sense. The ego and dominant traits were seen in Beowulf throughout the book and his power hungry ego was shown countless times.