

BA in English

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Ans. to the Q. no : 02

"Beowulf was a hero"

□ Introduction:

Better to say, Beowulf is an old English epic poem. It is a wonderful example of "Old English literature". The author was anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet, referred to by scholars as the "Beowulf poet".

The story is set in Scandinavia. Beowulf is a hero of the Geats, comes to the help of Hrothgar, the king of Danes, whose hall in Heorot has been under attack by a Grendel, was a monster. After killing Grendel, the hall again attacks by a monster and now it is Grendel's mother, then also defeated by Beowulf again. After 50th years, Beowulf defeats a dragon but unfortunately, he was mortally wounded in the battle, after his death, they (people of Danes) cremate his body and erect a tower on a headland in his memory.

① D.T.D.

This story is known as the "Nowell Codex". It has no title in the original manuscript. In 1731 it was badly damaged by a fire, after that the "Nowell Codex" is currently housed in the British Library.

Discussion:

In this story Beowulf engages in battle, in three stages. We can call it the "First, Second and Third wars"

First battle with the Grendel:-

Beowulf starts with the story of Hrothgar, who constructed the great hall Heorot for himself and his warriors. In it they all spend their time singing and celebrating. Grendel, a troll-like monster said to be descended from the biblical Cain, is pained by the sound of joy. Suddenly Grendel attacks the hall and kills and devours many of Hrothgar's warriors while they sleep.

At that time Hrothgar and his people, helpless against Grendel, abandon Heorot.

After knowing Hrothgar's problem Beowulf, a young warrior from Geatland leaves his homeland with his king's permission to assist Hrothgar. Beowulf refuse to use any kind of weapon because he hold himself to be equal of Grendel.

"It is noteworthy that "Beowulf" is a brave and intelligent. which ~~is~~ introduces an ideal hero."

Beowulf tears Grendel's arm from his body and finally Grendel dies. Beowulf displays Grendel's arm at Heorot, this display would fuel Grendel's mother's anger in revenge.

Now the second battle with Grendel's mother:-

Beowulf jumps into the lake water to meet with Grendel's mother, and she and Beowulf engage in fierce combat. At a moment Beowulf gain sport

sword, hanging on the wall and apparently made for giants, and cuts her off with it.

In this case, Beowulf has shown his heroism again.

The third battle with the dragon; -

Through this battle ~~was~~ Beowulf reveals his heroism and at the same time brings to an end of the heroic history of his life.

Beowulf returns home and eventually become the king of his own people. One day after 50th years Beowulf and his warriors came to fight the dragon when it leaves its cave in a rage, burning everything in sight. But Beowulf tells

his men that he will fight the dragon alone and they should wait on the barrow. They two (Wiglaf & Beowulf) slay the dragon, but Beowulf is mortally wounded.

Afterward Beowulf is ritually on a great pyre in



Greatland while his people wail and mourn him, bearing that without him, the Geats are 'defenceless' against attacks from surrounding tribes. Afterwards a barrow, visible from the sea, is built in his memory.

After this it is clear to us Beowulf was a hero to his people even to the people of other's kingdom.

Conclusion;

As we see in the story, when king Hrothgar was helpless, he prayed to Beowulf for help. And Beowulf helped the king Hrothgar twice. As a result, king Hrothgar honored Beowulf with gratitude and wealth. In the third battle, his soldiers left him alone and fled. He was slightly injured in the encounter with the dragon and defeated the dragon. In each case, his heroic deeds have led to the defeat of the enemy.

So from this we can say Beowulf is a hero and the story shows his heroic image.