

***Beowulf*: Important People and Places**

The Geats

A tribe of people that lived in what is now Sweden

Beowulf:

- A Geat warrior with super strength
- Volunteers to go to the aid of King Hrothgar and the Danes
- Kills Grendel
- Kills Grendel's mother
- Becomes king of the Geats
- Dies battling a dragon
- Known as "the Geats' proud prince," "Higlac's follower," "the Geats' great chief," "that mighty protector of men"

Higlac:

- King of the Geats for the first two thirds of the book
- Beowulf's uncle
- Beowulf becomes king of the Geats after Higlac's death and Higlac's son's death

Higd:

- Higlac's wife

Wiglaf:

- A Geat warrior loyal to Beowulf
- The only one of Beowulf's men to stay with the king as he fought the dragon and died
- Becomes king of the Geats after Beowulf's death

Edgetho:

- Beowulf's father, deceased

- The only reason he is important is that many years before our story opens, King Hrothgar gave Edgetho shelter in Denmark after Edgetho murdered a rival tribe's warrior. His countrymen (the Geats) would not allow him to come home because they were afraid it would start a war. Hrothgar took Edgetho in and then sent payment to the dead warrior's king to end the feud. Part of Beowulf's motivation for going to fight Grendel is to repay the debt owed to Hrothgar for helping his father.

The Danes

A tribe of people that lived in what is now Denmark

Hrothgar:

- King of the Danes
- A much-loved king and giver of rings
- Built a mead hall called Herot as a place for his people to gather and celebrate victories
- Once protected Beowulf's father, Edgetho, and bought the end of a feud that had kept Edgetho from returning home
- Advises Beowulf against being too prideful
- Known as "our warmhearted lord," "giver of bright rings," "the Danes' high prince," "protector of the Danes"

Welthow:

- Hrothgar's wife
- Known as "Hrothgar's gold-ringed queen" and "the bracelet-wearing Queen"

Unferth:

- A Danish warrior who resents and doubts Beowulf
- Speaks disrespectfully to Beowulf, questioning the truth of Beowulf's past victories and adventures
- Famous, or infamous, for killing some of his own kin

- Lends Beowulf his sword, Hrunting, for the battle against Grendel's mother, then gives it to Beowulf as a gift when Beowulf departs for home

Esher:

- Hrothgar's closest advisor and friend
- Killed by Grendel's mother

The Monsters

Grendel:

- Lives in a swampy lake near Herot
- Descended from Cain
- Disturbed by music and songs about God coming from Herot
- Attacks and controls Herot for 12 years until Beowulf shows up
- Beowulf bests him in hand-to-hand combat and rips his arm off
- Known as "mankind's enemy," "the shadow of death," "shepherd of evil," "guardian of crime," "sin-stained demon," "the Almighty's enemy," "hell's captive"

Grendel's mother:

- Attacks Herot to avenge Grendel's death
- Fights Beowulf in her underwater battle hall
- Almost defeats Beowulf
- Killed when Beowulf cuts her head off

The Dragon:

- Lives in a stone tower filled with treasure
- Awakened when a slave steals a golden cup from his hoard of treasure
- Attacks the Geats as revenge for the stolen cup
- Mortally wounds Beowulf with a poisonous bite to the neck
- Killed by Beowulf and Wiglaf

Other Places and Things

Herot:

- The mead hall built by Hrothgar and attacked by Grendel and Grendel's mother

Hrunting:

- Unferth's sword
- He lent it to Beowulf for the battle with Grendel's mother
- Later gave it to Beowulf as a gift