

## Beowulf (Episode Four) Study Guide (Lines 397 - 605) Grendel's Mother

- Lines 400 – 405 The poet makes the point that all women (even monster women) are weaker warriors than men, and then describes, as a point of comparison, the actions of courageous men doing battle.
1. Lines 414 – 415 Why does the Beowulf Poet have Grendel's mother seize Hrothgar's closest friend?
  2. Why does Grendel's mother take her son's claw? (line 421)
  3. What sort of place is the underwater lair of Grendel's mother? How does the translator's use of alliteration make this description more effective? (lines 425 – 432)
  4. What characteristic of an epic hero does Beowulf display in lines 450 – 453?
  5. For how many years did Grendel's mother rule the waters?
  6. Who else came to see the "she-wolf's catch"?
  7. How does the underwater setting contribute to the mood of the scene?
  8. Where does Grendel's mother live? Explain its symbolism and/or significance. Cite specific lines from the poem.
  9. "...the lake / Itself like a fiery flame." (lines 472 – 473) What does the lake symbolize?
  10. "The iron sang its fierce song, / Sang Beowulf's strength" (lines 477 – 478) Explain.
  11. How does "Hrunting" fail Beowulf? (line 480 - )
  12. (lines 474 – 492) What motivates Beowulf?
  13. This is the first time we see Beowulf in a vulnerable position. Why? How? Explain.
  14. What could Grendel's mother's "point" not kill Beowulf?
  15. What is the "second" source of Beowulf's protection? What does it foreshadow?
  16. What is the "third" blessed source of Beowulf's protection?
  17. What is Beowulf's emotional state at this climactic moment, when this lethal weapon is in his hands?
  18. How many warriors struggle to carry Grendel's head on a spear?
  19. (lines 556 -568) What conclusion do the warriors come to as they watch the surface of the lake?
  20. Why does the sword dissolve after Beowulf decapitates Grendel?
  21. Why do the Geats want the Danes to see the monster's skull (lines 593 – 594)?
  22. Which of the following statements best summarizes lines 578 – 605 ("Beowulf's return to Herot")?
    - a. While the lake turns red with blood, Beowulf swims to the shore and walks with his men back to the mead hall.
    - b. The weight of Grendel's skull is so enormous that Beowulf's men stagger; Beowulf himself ends up carrying the ugly head into the mead hall.
    - c. Beowulf and his men, triumphant, return to the mead hall, where they present Hrothgar with the head of Grendel.
  23. What heroic act is Beowulf recognized for in Episode Four?
  24. What qualities does Beowulf display in this second battle?
  25. Are Beowulf's words and deeds those of a traditional epic hero? Support your opinion with evidence from the poem.
  26. Does the behavior of Grendel's mother seem as wicked or unreasonable as Grendel's behavior? Explain your answer.

### Vocabulary

exalted	exulting	fetter	flourishing	headland	hilt
hoard	imperial	graybeard	loathsome	vane	