

# BEOWULF

Translated

By

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## Chapter 32

THE FALL OF HIS LORD HE WAS FAIN TO REQUITE  
IN AFTER DAYS; AND TO EADGILS HE PROVED  
FRIEND TO THE FRIENDLESS, AND FORCES SENT  
OVER THE SEA TO THE SON OF OHTERE,  
WEAPONS AND WARRIORS: WELL REPAID HE  
THOSE CARE-PATHS COLD WHEN THE KING HE SLEW. [FOOTNOTE 1]  
THUS SAFE THROUGH STRUGGLES THE SON OF ECGTHEOW  
HAD PASSED A PLENTY, THROUGH PERILS DIRE,  
WITH DARING DEEDS, TILL THIS DAY WAS COME  
THAT DOOMED HIM NOW WITH THE DRAGON TO STRIVE.

WITH COMRADES ELEVEN THE LORD OF GEATS  
SWOLLEN IN RAGE WENT SEEKING THE DRAGON.  
HE HAD HEARD WHENCE ALL THE HARM AROSE  
AND THE KILLING OF CLANSMEN; THAT CUP OF PRICE  
ON THE LAP OF THE LORD HAD BEEN LAID BY THE FINDER.  
IN THE THRONG WAS THIS ONE THIRTEENTH MAN,  
STARTER OF ALL THE STRIFE AND ILL,  
CARE-LADEN CAPTIVE; CRINGING THENCE  
FORCED AND RELUCTANT, HE LED THEM ON  
TILL HE CAME IN KEN OF THAT CAVERN-HALL,  
THE BARROW DELVED NEAR BILLOWY SURGES,

FLOOD OF OCEAN. WITHIN 'T WAS FULL  
OF WIRE-GOLD AND JEWELS; A JEALOUS WARDEN,  
WARRIOR TRUSTY, THE TREASURES HELD,  
LURKED IN HIS LAIR. NOT LIGHT THE TASK  
OF ENTRANCE FOR ANY OF EARTH-BORN MEN!

SAT ON THE HEADLAND THE HERO KING,  
SPAKE WORDS OF HAIL TO HIS HEARTH-COMPANIONS,  
GOLD-FRIEND OF GEATS. ALL GLOOMY HIS SOUL,  
WAVERING, DEATH-BOUND. WYRD FULL NIGH  
STOOD READY TO GREET THE GRAY-HAIRED MAN,  
TO SEIZE HIS SOUL-HOARD, SUNDER APART  
LIFE AND BODY. NOT LONG WOULD BE  
THE WARRIOR'S SPIRIT ENWOUND WITH FLESH.

BEOWULF SPAKE, THE BAIRN OF ECGTHEOW:-  
"THROUGH STORE OF STRUGGLES I STROVE IN YOUTH,  
MIGHTY FEUDS; I MIND THEM ALL.  
I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD WHEN THE SOVRAN OF RINGS,  
FRIEND-OF-HIS-FOLK, FROM MY FATHER TOOK ME,  
HAD ME, AND HELD ME, HRETHEL THE KING,  
WITH FOOD AND FEE, FAITHFUL IN KINSHIP.  
NE'ER, WHILE I LIVED THERE, HE LOATHLIER FOUND ME,  
BAIRN IN THE BURG, THAN HIS BIRTHRIGHT SONS,  
HEREBEALD AND HAETHCYN AND HYGELAC MINE.  
FOR THE ELDEST OF THESE, BY UNMEET CHANCE,  
BY KINSMAN'S DEED, WAS THE DEATH-BED STREWN,  
WHEN HAETHCYN KILLED HIM WITH HORNY BOW,  
HIS OWN DEAR LIEGE LAID LOW WITH AN ARROW,  
MISSED THE MARK AND HIS MATE SHOT DOWN,  
ONE BROTHER THE OTHER, WITH BLOODY SHAFT.  
A FEELESS FIGHT, [FOOTNOTE 2] AND A FEARFUL SIN,  
HORROR TO HRETHEL; YET, HARD AS IT WAS,  
UNAVENGED MUST THE ATHELING DIE!  
TOO AWFUL IT IS FOR AN AGED MAN  
TO BIDE AND BEAR, THAT HIS BAIRN SO YOUNG  
RIDES ON THE GALLOWS. A RIME HE MAKES,  
SORROW-SONG FOR HIS SON THERE HANGING  
AS RAPTURE OF RAVENS; NO RESCUE NOW

CAN COME FROM THE OLD, DISABLED MAN!  
STILL IS HE MINDED, AS MORNING BREAKS,  
OF THE HEIR GONE ELSEWHERE; [FOOTNOTE 3] ANOTHER HE HOPES NOT  
HE WILL BIDE TO SEE HIS BURG WITHIN  
AS WARD FOR HIS WEALTH, NOW THE ONE HAS FOUND  
DOOM OF DEATH THAT THE DEED INCURRED.  
FORLORN HE LOOKS ON THE LODGE OF HIS SON,  
WINE-HALL WASTE AND WIND-SWEPT CHAMBERS  
REFT OF REVEL. THE RIDER SLEEPETH,  
THE HERO, FAR-HIDDEN; [FOOTNOTE 4] NO HARP RESOUNDS,  
IN THE COURTS NO WASSAIL, AS ONCE WAS HEARD.

### Footnotes

1. That is, Beowulf supports Eadgils against Onela, who is slain by Eadgils in revenge for the “care-paths” of exile into which Onela forced him.
2. That is, the king could claim no wergild, or man-price, from one son for the killing of the other.
3. Usual euphemism for death.
4. Sc. in the grave.