

# BEOWULF

Translated

By

Frances B. Grummere



---

## Chapter 33

“THEN HE GOES TO HIS CHAMBER, A GRIEF-SONG CHANTS  
ALONE FOR HIS LOST. TOO LARGE ALL SEEMS,  
HOMESTEAD AND HOUSE. SO THE HELMET-OF-WEDERS  
HID IN HIS HEART FOR HEREBEALD  
WAVES OF WOE. NO WAY COULD HE TAKE  
TO AVENGE ON THE SLAYER SLAUGHTER SO FOUL;  
NOR E’EN COULD HE HARASS THAT HERO AT ALL  
WITH LOATHING DEED, THOUGH HE LOVED HIM NOT.  
AND SO FOR THE SORROW HIS SOUL ENDURED,  
MEN’S GLADNESS HE GAVE UP AND GOD’S LIGHT CHOSE.  
LANDS AND CITIES HE LEFT HIS SONS  
(AS THE WEALTHY DO) WHEN HE WENT FROM EARTH.  
THERE WAS STRIFE AND STRUGGLE ‘TWINX SWEDE AND GEAT  
O’ER THE WIDTH OF WATERS; WAR AROSE,  
HARD BATTLE-HORROR, WHEN HRETHEL DIED,  
AND ONGENTHEOW’S OFFSPRING GREW  
STRIFE-KEEN, BOLD, NOR BROOKED O’ER THE SEAS  
PACT OF PEACE, BUT PUSHED THEIR HOSTS  
TO HARASS IN HATRED BY HREOSNABEORH.  
MEN OF MY FOLK FOR THAT FEUD HAD VENGEANCE,  
FOR WOFUL WAR (’TIS WIDELY KNOWN),  
THOUGH ONE OF THEM BOUGHT IT WITH BLOOD OF HIS HEART,

A BARGAIN HARD: FOR HAETHCYN PROVED  
FATAL THAT FRAY, FOR THE FIRST-OF-GEATS.  
AT MORN, I HEARD, WAS THE MURDERER KILLED  
BY KINSMAN FOR KINSMAN, [FOOTNOTE 1] WITH CLASH OF SWORD,  
WHEN ONGENTHEOW MET EÓFOR THERE.  
WIDE SPLIT THE WAR-HELM: WAN HE FELL,  
HOARY SCYLFING; THE HAND THAT SMOTE HIM  
OF FEUD WAS MINDFUL, NOR FLINCHED FROM THE DEATH-BLOW.

– “FOR ALL THAT HE [FOOTNOTE 2] GAVE ME, MY GLEAMING SWORD  
REPAID HIM AT WAR, – SUCH POWER I WIELDED, –  
FOR LORDLY TREASURE: WITH LAND HE ENTRUSTED ME,  
HOMESTEAD AND HOUSE. HE HAD NO NEED  
FROM SWEDISH REALM, OR FROM SPEAR-DANE FOLK,  
OR FROM MEN OF THE GIFTHS, TO GET HIM HELP, –  
SOME WARRIOR WORSE FOR WAGE TO BUY!  
EVER I FOUGHT IN THE FRONT OF ALL,  
SOLE TO THE FORE; AND SO SHALL I FIGHT  
WHILE I BIDE IN LIFE AND THIS BLADE SHALL LAST  
THAT EARLY AND LATE HATH LOYAL PROVED  
SINCE FOR MY DOUGHTINESS DAEGHREFN FELL,  
SLAIN BY MY HAND, THE HUGAS’ CHAMPION.  
NOR FARED HE THENCE TO THE FRISIAN KING  
WITH THE BOOTY BACK, AND BREAST-ADORNMENTS;  
BUT, SLAIN IN STRUGGLE, THAT STANDARD-BEARER  
FELL, ATHELING BRAVE. NOT WITH BLADE WAS HE SLAIN,  
BUT HIS BONES WERE BROKEN BY BRAWNY GRIPE,  
HIS HEART-WAVES STILLED. – THE SWORD-EDGE NOW,  
HARD BLADE AND MY HAND, FOR THE HOARD SHALL STRIVE.”

BEOWULF SPAKE, AND A BATTLE-VOW MADE  
HIS LAST OF ALL: “I HAVE LIVED THROUGH MANY  
WARS IN MY YOUTH; NOW ONCE AGAIN,  
OLD FOLK-DEFENDER, FEUD WILL I SEEK,  
DO DOUGHTY DEEDS, IF THE DARK DESTROYER  
FORTH FROM HIS CAVERN COME TO FIGHT ME!”  
THEN HAILED HE THE HELMETED HEROES ALL,  
FOR THE LAST TIME GREETING HIS LIEGEMEN DEAR,  
COMRADES OF WAR: “I SHOULD CARRY NO WEAPON,

NO SWORD TO THE SERPENT, IF SURE I KNEW  
HOW, WITH SUCH ENEMY, ELSE MY VOWS  
I COULD GAIN AS I DID IN GRENDEL'S DAY.  
BUT FIRE IN THIS FIGHT I MUST FEAR ME NOW,  
AND POISONOUS BREATH; SO I BRING WITH ME  
BREASTPLATE AND BOARD. [FOOTNOTE 3] FROM THE BARROW'S KEEPER  
NO FOOTBREADTH FLEE I. ONE FIGHT SHALL END  
OUR WAR BY THE WALL, AS WYRD ALLOTS,  
ALL MANKIND'S MASTER. MY MOOD IS BOLD  
BUT FORBEARS TO BOAST O'ER THIS BATTLING-FLYER.  
– NOW ABIDE BY THE BARROW, YE BREASTPLATE-MAILED,  
YE HEROES IN HARNESS, WHICH OF US TWAIN  
BETTER FROM BATTLE-RUSH BEAR HIS WOUNDS.  
WAIT YE THE FINISH. THE FIGHT IS NOT YOURS,  
NOR MEET FOR ANY BUT ME ALONE  
TO MEASURE MIGHT WITH THIS MONSTER HERE  
AND PLAY THE HERO. HARDILY I  
SHALL WIN THAT WEALTH, OR WAR SHALL SEIZE,  
CRUEL KILLING, YOUR KING AND LORD!”

UP STOOD THEN WITH SHIELD THE STURDY CHAMPION,  
STAYED BY THE STRENGTH OF HIS SINGLE MANHOOD,  
AND HARDY 'NEATH HELMET HIS HARNESS BORE  
UNDER CLEFT OF THE CLIFFS: NO COWARD'S PATH!  
SOON SPIED BY THE WALL THAT WARRIOR CHIEF,  
SURVIVOR OF MANY A VICTORY-FIELD  
WHERE FOEMEN FOUGHT WITH FURIOUS CLASHINGS,  
AN ARCH OF STONE; AND WITHIN, A STREAM  
THAT BROKE FROM THE BARROW. THE BROOKLET'S WAVE  
WAS HOT WITH FIRE. THE HOARD THAT WAY  
HE NEVER COULD HOPE UNHARMED TO NEAR,  
OR ENDURE THOSE DEEPS, [FOOTNOTE 4] FOR THE DRAGON'S FLAME.  
THEN LET FROM HIS BREAST, FOR HE BURST WITH RAGE,  
THE WEDER-GEAT PRINCE A WORD OUTGO;  
STORMED THE STARK-HEART; STERN WENT RINGING  
AND CLEAR HIS CRY 'NEATH THE CLIFF-ROCKS GRAY.  
THE HOARD-GUARD HEARD A HUMAN VOICE;  
HIS RAGE WAS ENKINDLED. NO RESPITE NOW  
FOR PACT OF PEACE! THE POISON-BREATH

OF THAT FOUL WORM FIRST CAME FORTH FROM THE CAVE,  
HOT REEK-OF-FIGHT: THE ROCKS RESOUNDED.  
STOUT BY THE STONE-WAY HIS SHIELD HE RAISED,  
LORD OF THE GEATS, AGAINST THE LOATHED-ONE;  
WHILE WITH COURAGE KEEN THAT COILED FOE  
CAME SEEKING STRIFE. THE STURDY KING  
HAD DRAWN HIS SWORD, NOT DULL OF EDGE,  
HEIRLOOM OLD; AND EACH OF THE TWO  
FELT FEAR OF HIS FOE, THOUGH FIERCE THEIR MOOD.  
STOUTLY STOOD WITH HIS SHIELD HIGH-RAISED  
THE WARRIOR KING, AS THE WORM NOW COILED  
TOGETHER AMAIN: THE MAILED-ONE WAITED.  
NOW, SPIRE BY SPIRE, FAST SPED AND GLIDED  
THAT BLAZING SERPENT. THE SHIELD PROTECTED,  
SOUL AND BODY A SHORTER WHILE  
FOR THE HERO-KING THAN HIS HEART DESIRED,  
COULD HIS WILL HAVE WIELDED THE WELCOME RESPITE  
BUT ONCE IN HIS LIFE! BUT WYRD DENIED IT,  
AND VICTORY'S HONORS. – HIS ARM HE LIFTED  
LORD OF THE GEATS, THE GRIM FOE SMOTE  
WITH ATHELING'S HEIRLOOM. ITS EDGE WAS TURNED  
BROWN BLADE, ON THE BONE, AND BIT MORE FEEBLY  
THAN ITS NOBLE MASTER HAD NEED OF THEN  
IN HIS BALEFUL STRESS. – THEN THE BARROW'S KEEPER  
WAXED FULL WILD FOR THAT WEIGHTY BLOW,  
CAST DEADLY FLAMES; WIDE DROVE AND FAR  
THOSE VICIOUS FIRES. NO VICTOR'S GLORY  
THE GEATS' LORD BOASTED; HIS BRAND HAD FAILED,  
NAKED IN BATTLE, AS NEVER IT SHOULD,  
EXCELLENT IRON! – 'T WAS NO EASY PATH  
THAT ECGTHEOW'S HONORED HEIR MUST TREAD  
OVER THE PLAIN TO THE PLACE OF THE FOE;  
FOR AGAINST HIS WILL HE MUST WIN A HOME  
ELSEWHERE FAR, AS MUST ALL MEN, LEAVING  
THIS LAPSING LIFE! – NOT LONG IT WAS  
ERE THOSE CHAMPIONS GRIMLY CLOSED AGAIN.  
THE HOARD-GUARD WAS HEARTENED; HIGH HEAVED HIS BREAST  
ONCE MORE; AND BY PERIL WAS PRESSED AGAIN,  
ENFOLDED IN FLAMES, THE FOLK-COMMANDER!

NOR YET ABOUT HIM HIS BAND OF COMRADES,  
SONS OF ATHELINGS, ARMED STOOD  
WITH WARLIKE FRONT: TO THE WOODS THEY BENT THEM,  
THEIR LIVES TO SAVE. BUT THE SOUL OF ONE  
WITH CARE WAS CUMBERED. KINSHIP TRUE  
CAN NEVER BE MARRED IN A NOBLE MIND!

### **Footnotes**

1. Eofor for Wulf. — The immediate provocation for Eofor in killing “the hoary Scylfing,” Ongentheow, is that the latter has just struck Wulf down; but the king, Haethcyn, is also avenged by the blow. See the detailed description below.
2. Hygelac.
3. Shield.
4. The hollow passage.