

# BEOWULF

Translated

By

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## Chapter 37

IT WAS HEAVY HAP FOR THAT HERO YOUNG  
ON HIS LORD BELOVED TO LOOK AND FIND HIM  
LYING ON EARTH WITH LIFE AT END,  
SORROWFUL SIGHT. BUT THE SLAYER TOO,  
AWFUL EARTH-DRAGON, EMPTY OF BREATH,  
LAY FELLED IN FIGHT, NOR, FAIN OF ITS TREASURE,  
COULD THE WRITHING MONSTER RULE IT MORE.  
FOR EDGES OF IRON HAD ENDED ITS DAYS,  
HARD AND BATTLE-SHARP, HAMMERS' LEAVING; [FOOTNOTE 1]  
AND THAT FLIER-AFAR HAD FALLEN TO GROUND  
HUSHED BY ITS HURT, ITS HOARD ALL NEAR,  
NO LONGER LUSTY ALOFT TO WHIRL  
AT MIDNIGHT, MAKING ITS MERRIMENT SEEN,  
PROUD OF ITS PRIZES: PRONE IT SANK  
BY THE HANDIWORK OF THE HERO-KING.  
FOR SOOTH AMONG FOLK BUT FEW ACHIEVE,  
— THOUGH STURDY AND STRONG, AS STORIES TELL ME,  
AND NEVER SO DARING IN DEED OF VALOR, —  
THE PERILOUS BREATH OF A POISON-FOE  
TO BRAVE, AND TO RUSH ON THE RING-BOARD HALL,  
WHENEVER HIS WATCH THE WARDEN KEEPS  
BOLD IN THE BARROW. BEOWULF PAID

THE PRICE OF DEATH FOR THAT PRECIOUS HOARD;  
AND EACH OF THE FOES HAD FOUND THE END  
OF THIS FLEETING LIFE. BEFELL ERELONG  
THAT THE LAGGARDS IN WAR THE WOOD HAD LEFT,  
TROTHBREAKERS, COWARDS, TEN TOGETHER,  
FEARING BEFORE TO FLOURISH A SPEAR  
IN THE SORE DISTRESS OF THEIR SOVRAN LORD.  
NOW IN THEIR SHAME THEIR SHIELDS THEY CARRIED,  
ARMOR OF FIGHT, WHERE THE OLD MAN LAY;  
AND THEY GAZED ON WIGLAF. WEARIED HE SAT  
AT HIS SOVRAN'S SHOULDER, SHIELDSMAN GOOD,  
TO WAKE HIM WITH WATER. [FOOTNOTE 2] NOWISE IT AVAILED.  
THOUGH WELL HE WISHED IT, IN WORLD NO MORE  
COULD HE BARRIER LIFE FOR THAT LEADER-OF-BATTLES  
NOR BAFFLE THE WILL OF ALL-WIELDING GOD.  
DOOM OF THE LORD WAS LAW O'ER THE DEEDS  
OF EVERY MAN, AS IT IS TO-DAY.  
GRIM WAS THE ANSWER, EASY TO GET,  
FROM THE YOUTH FOR THOSE THAT HAD YIELDED TO FEAR!  
WIGLAF SPAKE, THE SON OF WEOHSTAN, –  
MOURNFUL HE LOOKED ON THOSE MEN UNLOVED:–  
“WHO SOOTH WILL SPEAK, CAN SAY INDEED  
THAT THE RULER WHO GAVE YOU GOLDEN RINGS  
AND THE HARNESS OF WAR IN WHICH YE STAND  
– FOR HE AT ALE-BENCH OFTEN-TIMES  
BESTOWED ON HALL-FOLK HELM AND BREASTPLATE,  
LORD TO LIEGEMEN, THE LIKELIEST GEAR  
WHICH NEAR OF FAR HE COULD FIND TO GIVE, –  
THREW AWAY AND WASTED THESE WEEDS OF BATTLE,  
ON MEN WHO FAILED WHEN THE FOEMEN CAME!  
NOT AT ALL COULD THE KING OF HIS COMRADES-IN-ARMS  
VENTURE TO VAUNT, THOUGH THE VICTORY-WIELDER,  
GOD, GAVE HIM GRACE THAT HE GOT REVENGE  
SOLE WITH HIS SWORD IN STRESS AND NEED.  
TO RESCUE HIS LIFE, 'T WAS LITTLE THAT I  
COULD SERVE HIM IN STRUGGLE; YET SHIFT I MADE  
(HOPELESS IT SEEMED) TO HELP MY KINSMAN.  
ITS STRENGTH EVER WANED, WHEN WITH WEAPON I STRUCK  
THAT FATAL FOE, AND THE FIRE LESS STRONGLY

FLOWED FROM ITS HEAD. – TOO FEW THE HEROES  
IN THROE OF CONTEST THAT THRONGED TO OUR KING!  
NOW GIFT OF TREASURE AND GIRDING OF SWORD,  
JOY OF THE HOUSE AND HOME-DELIGHT  
SHALL FAIL YOUR FOLK; HIS FREEHOLD-LAND  
EVERY CLANSMAN WITHIN YOUR KIN  
SHALL LOSE AND LEAVE, WHEN LORDS Highborn  
HEAR AFAR OF THAT FLIGHT OF YOURS,  
A FAMELESS DEED. YEA, DEATH IS BETTER  
FOR LIEGEMEN ALL THAN A LIFE OF SHAME!”

**Footnotes**

1. What had been left or made by the hammer; well-forged.
2. Trying to revive him.