



Lord of the Geats

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Here is the famous Beowulf story, retold for the young-adult listener. Like the original Anglo-Saxon manuscript, it is divided into three parts. The first section narrates Beowulf's battle against Grendel. The second section tells of the furious revenge of Grendel's mother, an ageless monster with indomitable will, who lives in a dark green, murky sea, which the Danes believed to be bottomless, and who can stalk and kill with her son's savage power. (This section is often left out of retellings.)

The third section shows the great hero in his declining years and almost never appears in retellings. Herein, Beowulf is an old man. It is decades after his assistance to King Hrothgar, and Beowulf is back home among the Geats as their chosen king. His final battle shows his new method in fighting. Youthful speed and strength have been replaced with cunning, deception, strategy. There are moments when his strength revives. His opponent is an aging dragon, who now flies slowly and awkwardly, but can still shoot down enough fire to imperil the Geats kingdom.

Aging hero faces aging monster in an early-day twilight of the gods, with displays of valor and chivalry before these terms were known. The dragon breathes streaks of lethal fire, but suffers shortness of breath. The heavy scales on his body provide excellent armor, but tend to tire him. While flying, he notices small birds passing him. The two opponents feel a grudging respect and realize their era is ending, no matter who wins their relentless duel.



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Ashley Paul:

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