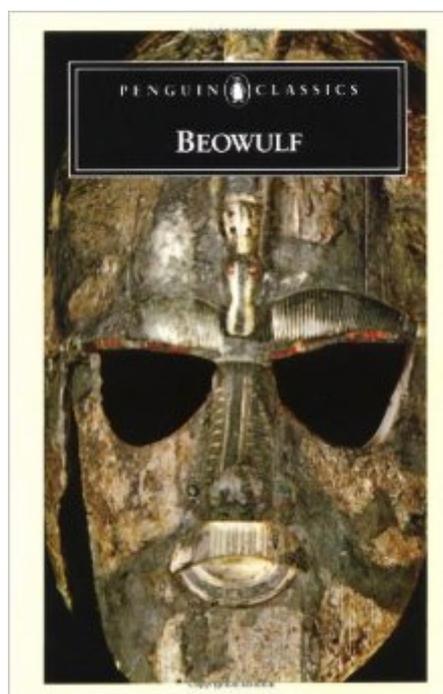


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Beowulf: A Prose Translation (Penguin Classics)paperback



Synopsis

The greatest surviving Old English poem rendered into modern prose *Beowulf* stands at the head of English literature; a poem of historical interest and epic scope. Although the first manuscript of *Beowulf* dates from around the year 1000 CE, it is thought that the poem existed in its present form from the year 850. *Beowulf's* adventures themselves stand in front of the wide historical canvas of 5th and 6th century Scandinavia. Against this heroic background of feuding and feasting, *Beowulf* first kills the monster Grendel and her mother, and later defends his people against a dragon in a battle that leaves them both mortally wounded. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Classics

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; New Ed edition (May 30, 1957)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140440704

ISBN-13: 978-0140440706

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.3 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars See all reviews (11 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This tale is one of the oldest in Western Europe and has been converted into at least two movies - the quality of which is irrelevant here - and contains many elements familiar to modern day readers and moviegoers such as its use of so many well-worn plot devices. For the uninitiated the story here can basically be boiled down to the concept of a young warrior and his band of merry men plundering

away in search of fame and fortune. Beowulf himself would love to become a king by his own hand and any treasures and pleasurable bed partners that come along with the deal would be just fine thanks very much. So our hero ye verily and forsooth fetches up to the shores of modern day Denmark to find out that a kingdom there is beset by a monster. At which point our hero figures that plunging a few feet of steel into the aforesaid beastly would probably help him upon his chosen career path. Things take a twist regarding how he must slay the foe, more complications arise from plot threads such as cranky mothers of recently deceased monsters, curses and some intrigue at the palace. Overall the whole thing seems ridiculously simple but within that so much of human ambition is laid bare. The concept that victory may only be ashes in your mouth and the fallibility of even great men is something that resonates to us down the ages and is comprehensible to both modern day readers as well as this epics original audiences. If you can get across the format of the story and the way in which things are expressed you will find a rich core story here and that is why this classic has endured down the centuries from its inception 1200-1300 years ago (depending on who you ask/read). As such it would make a fine addition to any `classics' library you are building up for yourself.

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