

How Grendel longed to get out, to escape to the forests and fens, but no power on this earth could force Beowulf to release his grip. Now Grendel knew, this merciless, murderous ogre, that he should never have come this night, that his death was coming and that, despite all his efforts to tear himself away, there was nothing he could do to prevent it, no way he could save himself. Fear of this death drove him mad with anger, and anger only made him stronger; he would fight to the death to save himself. He would never give in.

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It was amazing that the great hall of Heorot was not split asunder that night, so ferocious was the wrestling between these two giants. Locked together in this deadly embrace they reeled and writhed about the mead-hall, so that all the Danes outside could hear a dreadful cacophony of crashing and crying resounding through Heorot. Gold-worked trappings and iron braces, all well made and sturdy, simply snapped and buckled as the two of them in deadly earnest wrestled and grappled and struggled with one another.

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There was no ground given in this terrible fight, nor mercy either. So they fought on, this Grendel now fear-soaked, his strength failing him, and brave Beowulf, fist still clenched around the monster's arm and knowing he had only to cling on and not let go to banish to hell for ever the damned one, God's and his own worst enemy. Clearly outside they heard the monster's demon scream, his hideous, howling screech. The sound of it chilled every listener to the bone, yet hope gladdened them too, for these they knew were not human cries, but rather the strident sobbing of the beast in agony and terror.