

Beowulf, Agon Three: The Dragon

Nearly fifty years pass between Agon Two and Agon Three. Beowulf becomes established again in Geatland, and in his old age must face one last monster: the dragon. The outcome of this final battle will cement Beowulf's legacy as the greatest Anglo-Saxon warrior.

Characters

Many new characters are introduced in this last section of the poem. For an overview of some important characters and their relationships, [visit this website](#).

- **Heardred**- son of Hygelac and heir to the Geatish throne.
- **Shyolfings**- a Swedish clan that wars against the Geats.
- **The Dragon**- a fire-breathing creature that guards a hoard of treasure and viciously kills anyone who approaches.
- **Wiglaf**- a warrior in Beowulf's court. He is the only one of Beowulf's kinsmen to come to his aid during the fight with the dragon.

Reading and Discussion Questions

Answer the following questions with evidence from the text. For assistance with these questions, please refer to the Agon Three Answer Guide.

1. Reread ll. 2247-2270. How does this passage reflect the Anglo-Saxon literary tradition of *ubi sunt*? Use direct evidence from the poem to support your answer.
2. How does Beowulf become King of the Geats?
3. Look back at ll. 2345-2355. How might Beowulf's pride affect his battle with the dragon?
4. Why do you think that Beowulf doesn't fear death at the hands of the dragon?
5. Why does Wiglaf disobey Beowulf's orders and help him slay the dragon?
6. What is Beowulf's final wish?
7. Remember that *Beowulf* started as an oral tale— are there any places in Agon Three where the poem seems to be written as if it would be read aloud? Make sure to include a citation for your evidence.
8. What negative consequences could arise from Beowulf's death?

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- a. Do you think it was selfish, then, for Beowulf to march into such a difficult battle by himself when his death would start such a catastrophe? Why or why not?