

**Beowulf hears about Grendel and decides to travel from his home in Geatland (southern Sweden) to Heorot (in northeast Denmark) to see if he can help out.**

When he heard about Grendel, Hygelac's thane<sup>1</sup>  
was on home ground, over in Geatland.  
There was no one else like him alive.  
In his day, he was the mightiest man on earth,  
high-born and powerful. He order a boat 5  
that would ply<sup>2</sup> the waves. He announced his plan:  
to sail the swan's road and search out that king,  
the famous prince who needed defenders.  
Nobody tried to keep him from going,  
no elder denied him, dear as he was to them. 10  
Instead, they inspected omens<sup>3</sup> and spurred  
his ambition to go, whilst he moved about  
like the leader he was, enlisting men,  
the best he could find; with fourteen others  
the warrior boarded the boat as captain, 15  
a canny pilot along coast and currents.  
Time went by, the boat was on water,  
in close under the cliffs.  
Men climbed eagerly up the gangplank<sup>4</sup>,  
sand churned in surf<sup>5</sup>, warriors loaded 20  
a cargo of weapons, shining war-gear<sup>6</sup>  
in the vessel's hold<sup>7</sup>, then heaved out<sup>8</sup>,  
away with a will in their wood-weathered<sup>9</sup> ship.  
Over the waves, with the wind behind her  
and foam at her neck, she flew like a bird 25  
until her curved prow<sup>10</sup> had covered the distance  
and on the following day, at the due hour,  
those seafarers sighted land,  
sunlit cliffs, sheer crags<sup>11</sup>  
and looming headlands, the landfall they sought. 30  
It was the end of their voyage and the Geats vaulted  
Over the side, out on the sand,  
And moored<sup>12</sup> their ship. There was a clash of mail<sup>13</sup>  
And a thresh of gear<sup>14</sup>. They thanked God  
For that easy crossing on a clam sea. 35

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<sup>1</sup> Thane = royal vassal: Hygelac is king of the Geats and Beowulf's feudal lord and uncle

<sup>2</sup> To ply the waves = sail without difficulty

<sup>3</sup> Omens = signs showing whether future events will be good or bad

<sup>4</sup> Gangplank = wooden bridge from the dock to the ship

<sup>5</sup> Surf = sea foam

<sup>6</sup> Shining war-gear = gleaming battle equipment

<sup>7</sup> Vessel's hold = storage area below deck

<sup>8</sup> heaved out = launched the ship

<sup>9</sup> Wood-wreathed = made of wood

<sup>10</sup> Curved prow = bowed front end of the ship

<sup>11</sup> Sheer crags = steep rocky cliffs

<sup>12</sup> Moored = bound fast

<sup>13</sup> Clash of mail = noise of clanking armour > rumore di maglie metalliche

<sup>14</sup> Thresh of gear = noises of mechanical pieces