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Beowulf The Warrior (Living History Library)



Synopsis

Master storyteller Ian Serraillier has woven in modern narrative verse the story of Beowulf, the oldest epic in the English language. He succeeds in making this classic tale accessible to today's youth.

Book Information

Series: Living History Library

Paperback: 48 pages

Publisher: Bethlehem Books (April 1, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1883937035

ISBN-13: 978-1883937034

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 5.6 x 0.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Text: English (translation)

great for kids, could have been a little longer and maybe some better illustrations

Beowulf (Signet Classics) "My youngest son has been wildly enamoured of Beowulf for the past 40 years. I finally found a translation that made sense. It was one of his Christmas presents.

We bought this book for our homeschool. We're learning about Vikings.... Why isn't everyone reading this??? It's like the best boy book! Anyway, yeah, let's just put it this way, the children said, "do we HAVE to?" And then I gave them the, "try it, you'll like it." Speech. After the first chapter, they wanted me to finish the book.

from the hardback edition published 1961, Henry Z. Walck, Incorporated, New York" Here is a spirited version of the oldest English verse epic. With tremendous power and memorable simplicity,

Ian Serraillier has retold the heroic saga of the warrior who in his youth delivered Hrothgar the Dane from the menace of Grendel, the night-prowling monster; and who in his old age fought his last victorious but fatal battle against the dreadful dragon who ravaged the land of the Geats. The verse follow the pattern of the original poem closely, rekindling the fire and vigor of the unknown author who first wrote down this magnificent story, more than a thousand years ago." "To venture on the story of Beowulf in verse, whether for children or adults, is a deed with its own kind of heroism.

...There must be a hundred ways of failing; Mr. Serraillier has hit on one of the ways to succeed. In about 800 lines of well-wrought verse, suitable for reading aloud, and free from the stale smells of lamp and candle, he establishes a manly narrative..." -Times (London) Literary

Supplement "Absolutely terrific retelling that condenses the Beowulf story to about 800 lines from the original 3812, while keeping the tone and intent intact. In my opinion it is a literary work of genius, and of great understanding of the original tome. Read aloud for grades 2/3 thru high school. (for sensitive children do not tackle till grades 4/6 due to blood and battle scenes) Independent read for grades 5/6 thru adult, but really best for late jr. high and all thru high school, even as prep for college literature classes. This retelling is well-complemented by Beowulf by Michael Morpurgo for grades 5-12. For the Beowulf story for younger readers, grades 2/3 to 5/6, I recommend The Dragon Slayer by Rosemary Sutcliff. PS- Beowulf is much more likely to appeal to the male gender.

This handy edition of Beowulf has the virtue of being easily approachable by an average reader, whereas some of the other translations I've seen have almost been like reading the original Anglo-Saxon itself. The translation reads easily yet retains the flavor and rhythms of the ancient epic. Though it's still a little advanced for my kids (under age 6), it will definitely be bedtime fare in the not-too-distant future. For those unfamiliar with the story, it tells the tale of Beowulf and his battles against awful Grendel, the hideous mother of Grendel, and the terrible fire-breathing dragon. This edition includes a number of illustrations which will certainly help draw younger readers into the story. If you enjoyed Beowulf and want to know more about the Anglo-Saxon language, you might try *A Book For The Beginner In Anglo-saxon: Comprising A Short Grammar and Some Selections from the Gospels*. If you just like epic poems, there's also *The Lavinia: An Epic Poem* which is an epic in the Trojan War cycle written by a modern author and the classic *The Ballad of the White Horse* by G. K. Chesterton.

I loved this well-written and action-packed version of the story, and so did my five-year-old son.

I was lucky enough to find a hardcover, library-bound, 1961 version of this book at a booksale, so my review is for the story itself, rather than the book being sold. This retelling of the story is easily read aloud and brings with it the beauty of the original language of the poem. Other children's versions tell the story, but in a way that loses much of the magic, in my opinion. The illustrations are gorgeous! Some may be scary to young listeners, though. Do take advantage of the "Look Inside" feature to preview some of them. I am happy to see this classic reprinted and available to purchase.

My children (6 and 7 years old) thoroughly enjoyed listening to how the mighty and brave Beowulf defeated the evil Grendel and his Mother. The book is written very well and lends itself to a great deal of imagery. I was very glad this classic could be written in a manner that small children could understand and enjoy this great story.

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