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Beowulf (Legends From The Ancient North)



Synopsis

Legends from the Ancient North: Five classics of Norse literature that inspired J. R. R. Tolkien's epic vision in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Legendary fantasy writer J. R. R. Tolkien spent much of his life studying, translating, and teaching the ancient tales of northern Europe at Oxford and drew on them for his own writing. These epic stories, with their wizards and knights, dragons and trolls, cursed rings and magic swords, are as fascinating today as they were thousands of years ago. Reading them brings us as close as we will ever get to the magical worlds of the Vikings and the origins of their twentieth-century counterpart: Tolkien's Middle Earth. *Beowulf* tells the epic story of the heroic Beowulf and his battles, first against the monster Grendel, who laid waste to the castle of the Danish king Hrothgar, then with Grendel's avenging mother, and finally with a dragon that threatens to devastate his homeland. 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

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Customer Reviews

That's the famous first word of *Beowulf* in this translation by Michael Alexander, first published in

1973 and now reissued as part of the handsome Penguin set *Legends From the Ancient North*. *Beowulf* is the earliest surviving substantial work in the languages which became English, and thus it has attracted attention from scores of scholars, including most notably J.R.R. Tolkien. An epic poem, *Beowulf* is set in the tumultuous world of the 5th and 6th centuries in the waters and lands around what is now Denmark, where warriors struggle to conquer fabulous monsters. It's a breathtakingly beautiful poem which will remind readers, not surprisingly, of some of the best of Tolkien's own poetry, particularly those of the Rohirrim. This edition comes with a lengthy Introduction and Notes which allow non-specialists a clearer picture of the settings and characters. While this version of *Beowulf* may be less well known than the more recent one by Seamus Heaney, I found it to be an exciting and accessible read.

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