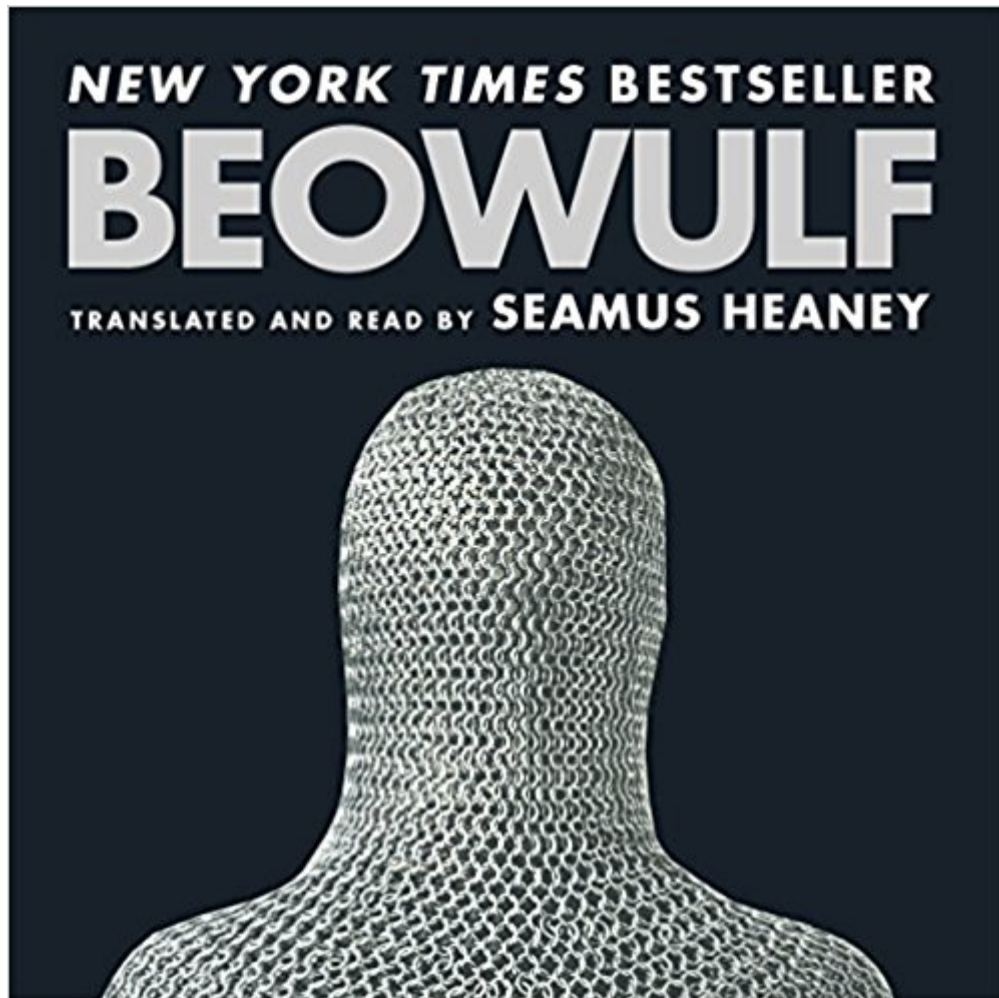




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# Beowulf



## Synopsis

A New York Times Bestseller and Whitbread Book of the Year. Heaney's performance reminds us that Beowulf, written near the turn of another millennium, was intended to be heard not read. Composed toward the end of the first millennium of our era, Beowulf is the elegiac narrative of the adventures of Beowulf, a Scandinavian hero who saves the Danes from the seemingly invincible monster Grendel and, later, from Grendel's mother. He then returns to his own country and lives to old age before dying in a vivid fight against a dragon. The poem is about encountering the monstrous, defeating it, and then having to live on in the exhausted aftermath. In the contours of this story, at once remote and uncannily familiar at the end of the twentieth century, Seamus Heaney finds a resonance that summons power to the poetry from deep beneath its surface. While an abridgment of Heaney's full translation of Beowulf, Heaney prepared this abridgment himself to read for the BBC program from which this recording is taken.

## Book Information

Audio CD

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Language: English

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 548 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #944,777 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #77 in [Books > Books on CD > Poetry & Drama](#) #86 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > European > Norse & Icelandic Sagas](#) #94 in [Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Poetry](#)

## Customer Reviews

“[Heaney] has made a masterpiece out of a masterpiece.” - Andrew Motion, The Financial Times  
“Accomplishes what before now had seemed impossible: a faithful rendering that is simultaneously an original and gripping poem in its own right.” - New York Times Book Review  
“How did he do it? How did Seamus Heaney fashion verses, singularly handsome verses that not only capture the somber grandeur and mythic vigor of the Anglo-Saxon original, but also reflect the rhythm and timbre of the English we speak today.... This newborn

translation makes accessible to everyone the first supremely great poem to be written in the English language. – Colin Campbell, Christian Science Monitor – “Magnificent, breathtaking.... Heaney has created something imperishable and great that is stainless – stainless, because its force as poetry makes it untouchable by the claw of literalism: it lives singly, as an English language poem. – James Wood, The Guardian – “Excellent . . . has the virtue of being both dignified and sophisticated, making previous versions look slightly flowery and antique by comparison. His intelligence, fine ear and obvious love of the poem bring *Beowulf* alive as melancholy masterpiece, a complex Christian-pagan lament about duty, loss and transience. . . . Heaney has done it (and us) a great service. – Claire Harman, Evening Standard --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Text: English (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Everything depends on the translation, and for a work as old and remote as this, the translation really has to be an original work in its own right while retaining its character as a translation. This is nearly impossible, yet Heaney pulls it off. Fabulous.

A well written and highly informative example of 11th Century literature. While the story is supposed to take part between Beowulf and Grendel in ancient Denmark, it was originally composed in Old English (Anglo Saxon) and it would be wonderful if more of us could read and speak this ancient form of English. Interesting insight into the times.

Seamus Heaney has provided a beautiful translation informed by his unique combination academic training, poetic mastery and Celtic heritage. This version of Beowulf delights the mind with lyric phrasing and perfect word choices. It is unfortunate that this paperback version is printed on fairly cheap paper; it would be nice if the richness of the word was met with substantive paper.

One of my favorite classics. What's not to love, with monsters chomping people's heads off, powerful verse, heroes, heroines, creeps and lots more. I've read a couple translations and this one is by far the best. I read this as an adult and loved it enough to re-read it. Who says very old books can't be awesome in modern times, if you're patient enough to put down your hand held gadget down!

This is one of the best translations I have read and I like that it is bilingual. I have a CD on Anglo-Saxon and will be able to use this book. Because Heaney was a poet, he was able to pick up on nuances and pace that other translators did not. I would recommend this for anyone interested in this great poem.

Kindle version DOES include the Old English version. It is easy to navigate, and you don't have to read that part. The Old English in its entirety is first, followed by the translation...so those worrying that the original English is in the way, it is not (it is not side-by-side bilingual). His modern translation is unparalleled, so it is worth purchasing this version. To ensure you are purchasing the correct version, do a search for Seamus Heaney Kindle Beowulf and it should be easy to purchase from there. ASIN: B001ULOPUE

I met Heaney 10 years ago at Dartmouth College where I was fortunate enough to hear him read his poetry -- I was captivated then and I still am now by his command of English. I almost enjoyed his introduction more than the actual translation for its erudition, rich vocabulary and contextual explanations. It's been a long time since I've seen the words "revenant," "chthonic" and "oneiric" bandied around with alacrity. I'm not an Old English scholar either, but I still found the facing translation useful. I agree with the reviewer below who said it would be helpful to have glosses and textual notes. Even better in this regard is the Robert Pinsky facing page translation of Dante's *Inferno*. Anyway, this translation makes Beowulf fun and accessible -- sure, it's worth reading the "classic" translations as well, but Heaney should be congratulated for bringing a book many were forced to read, to a state where the book can be savored. Like Branagh's revival of Shakespeare, who can lament the return of one of the most pivotal works in English. Read it!

Urged to read Seamus Heaney's translation of BEOWULF by the Best Sellers Lists (I felt the need to know why this old warhorse was getting so much popular attention...), I must join the ranks of readers who now feel a resurgence of faith in the reading public! We've all been through the original translations somewhere in our schooling and I never considered this an important poem. But what a wallop it now packs! Heaney's macho way with words and his tossing about of impossible names that challenge even Wagnerites rarely gets in the way of the sheer romanticism of centuries-old tale telling. This is "Fantasia" without needing the music, an epic, bragadocio good guy/bad guy story that leaps off the beautifully constructed and designed pages and just asks to be enjoyed. I doubt I'll ever struggle through the Old English version provided here page for page, but I'm sure I'll be

re-reading this bonanza whenever I feel the need for heroes. And we thought blood & guts & violence was a contemporary problem in the movies....!

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