

USBORNE YOUNG READING



Beowulf

Retold by Rob Lloyd Jones

Illustrated by Victor Tavares



Characters in the story

Beowulf (say
Bay-o-wolf)



Grendel



King
Hrothgar



Leofric
(Lee-of-fritch)



Wiglaf



The Danes



Grendel's mother



The Geats (Jee-ats)

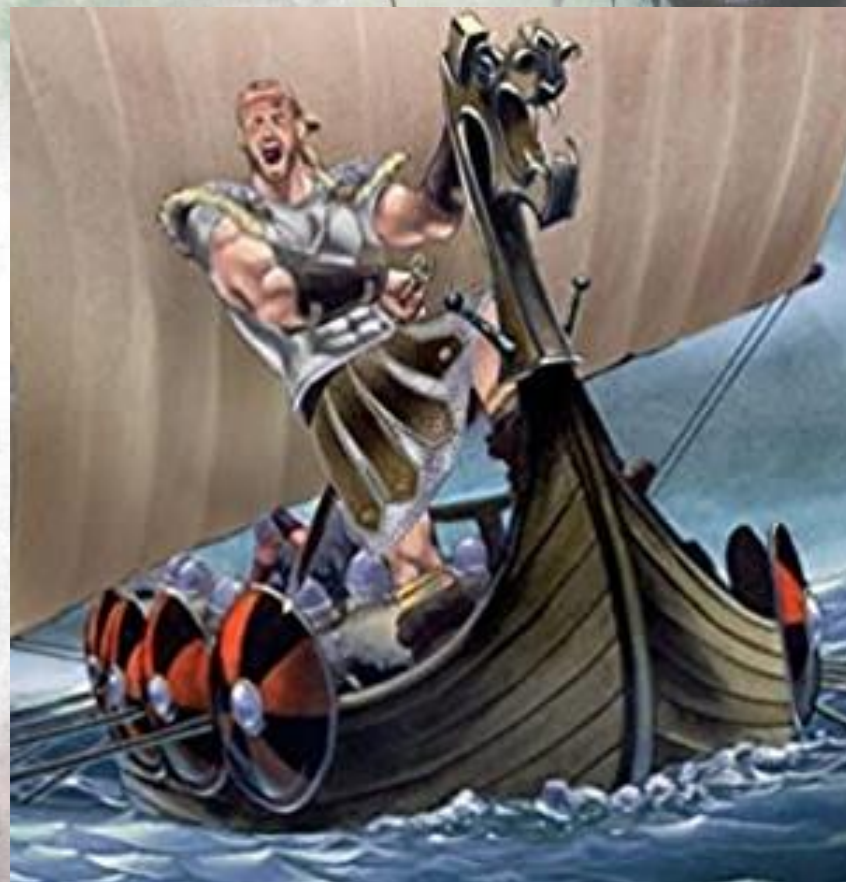


The dragon



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Chapter 4

Final feast

The guard led Beowulf and the Geats past lakes and bogs, to where Heorot towered above the moors.

The Geats were stunned by the hall's beauty. Beowulf handed the guard his sword. "Take my weapon, so your king knows I come as a friend."

"You'll need it again by nightfall," the guard warned. "That's when Grendel comes."



King Hrothgar sat inside. His face was lined with grief, but he managed a smile to greet the Geats. "You have come far," he said, "to a wild place."

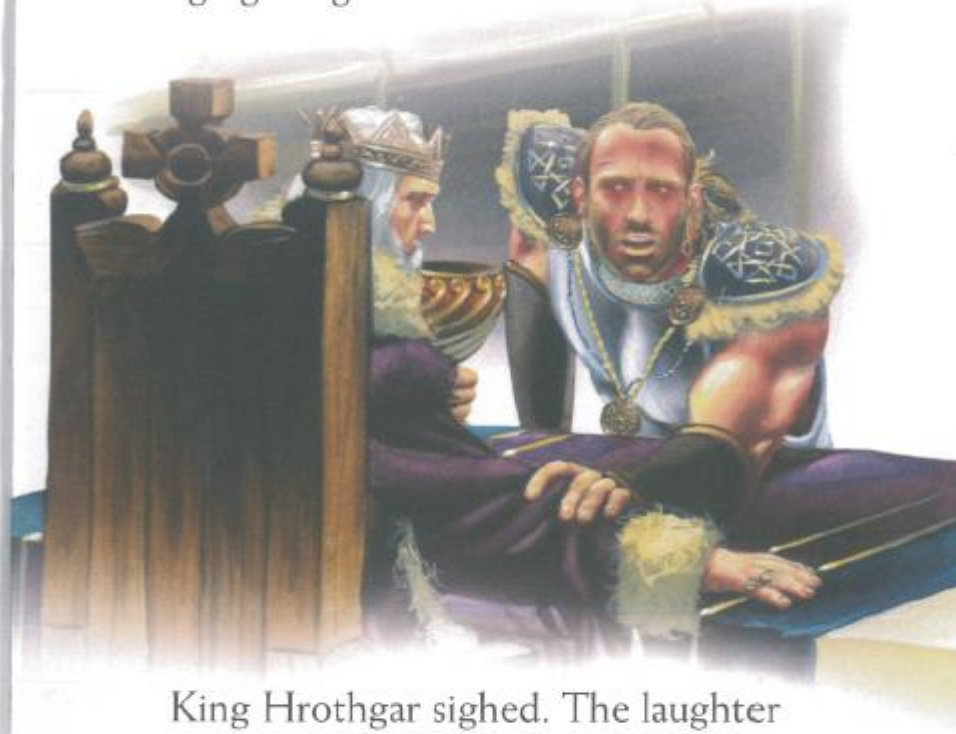
"We have come to kill your monster," Beowulf replied.

The king had heard many men vow to defeat Grendel, and all of them had died. This warrior, though, seemed certain.

"First," said the king, "you must join me for a feast."



The king sent for his warriors from nearby villages. The Danes and Geats ate together, swapping stories and singing songs.



King Hrothgar sighed. The laughter reminded him of happier times in Heorot.

Beowulf took the king's arm. "Tomorrow," he promised, "you will hear laughter again."

Chapter 5

Beowulf v Grendel

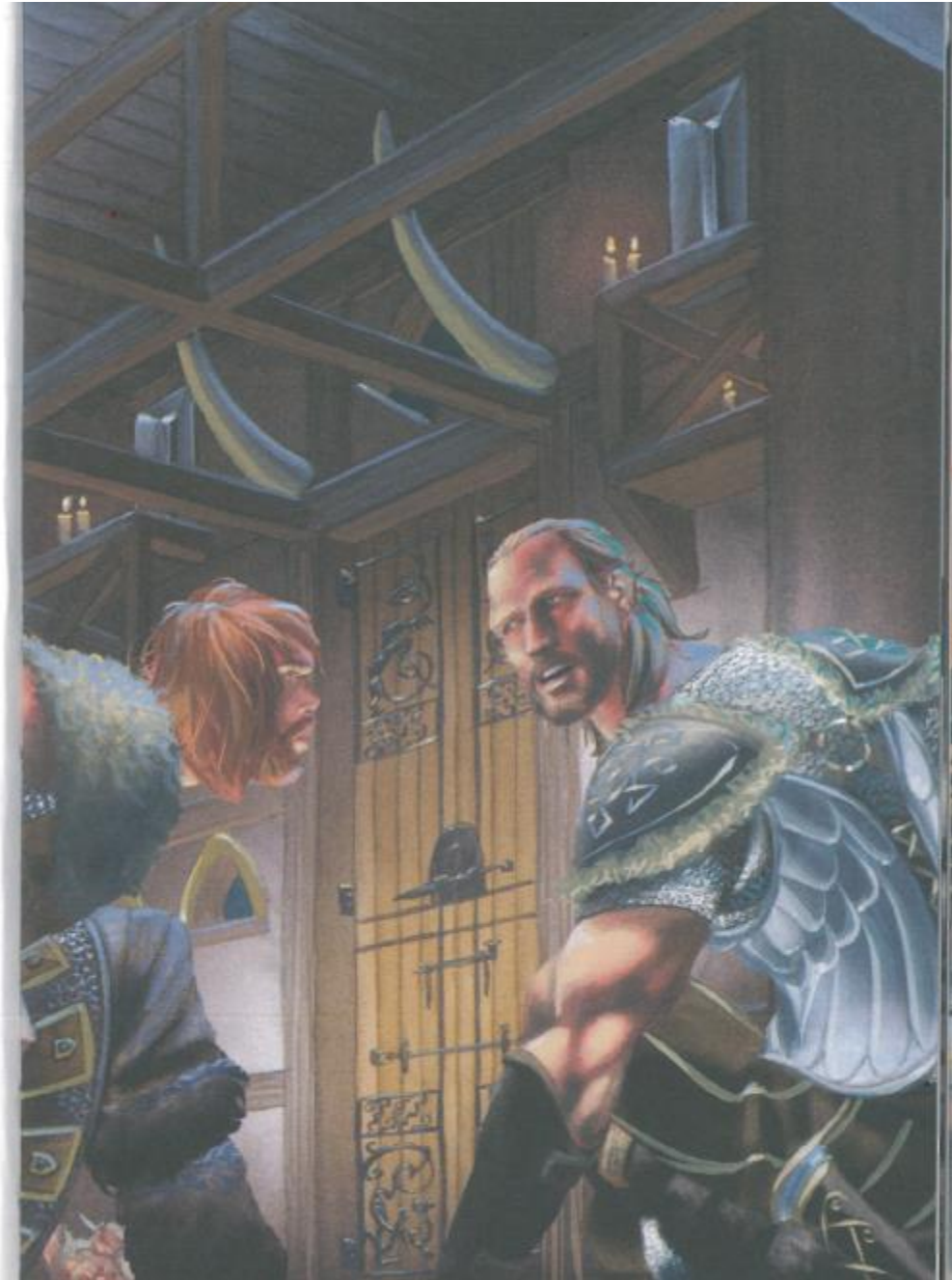
Night fell. The hall twinkled with candlelight as King Hrothgar and his men left the Geats to a nervous rest.

Most of the Geats huddled together at the back of the hall, armed with axes, knives and swords. But Beowulf sat alone in a dark corner near the doors.

Beowulf's friend Leofric crawled over. He looked worried. "Beowulf," he whispered, "where is your sword?"

"I gave it to the guard outside," Beowulf replied. "Grendel fights with bare hands, so I will too."

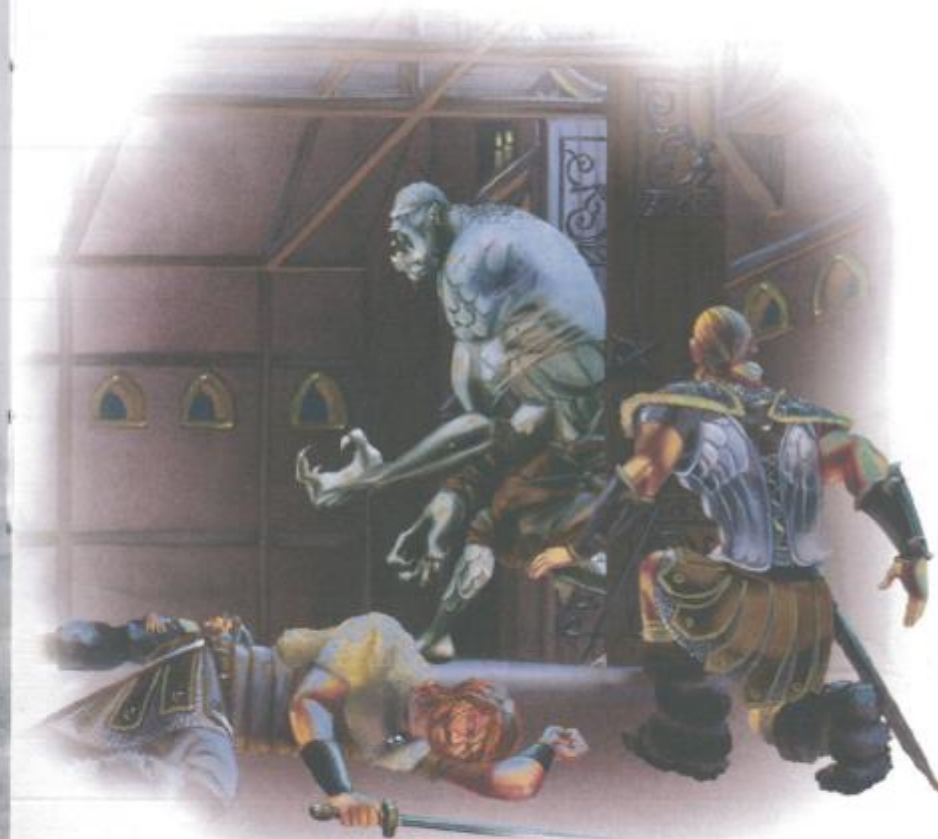
Beowulf saw the fear in his friend's face. "Don't worry Leofric," he added, "we will kill this monster."



An hour passed. Outside on the moors, one of the swamps bubbled. Grendel rose. The beast stomped towards Heorot, dripping with slime and hungry for blood.



Grendel tore open the doors and glared inside. All of the Geats lay fast asleep...

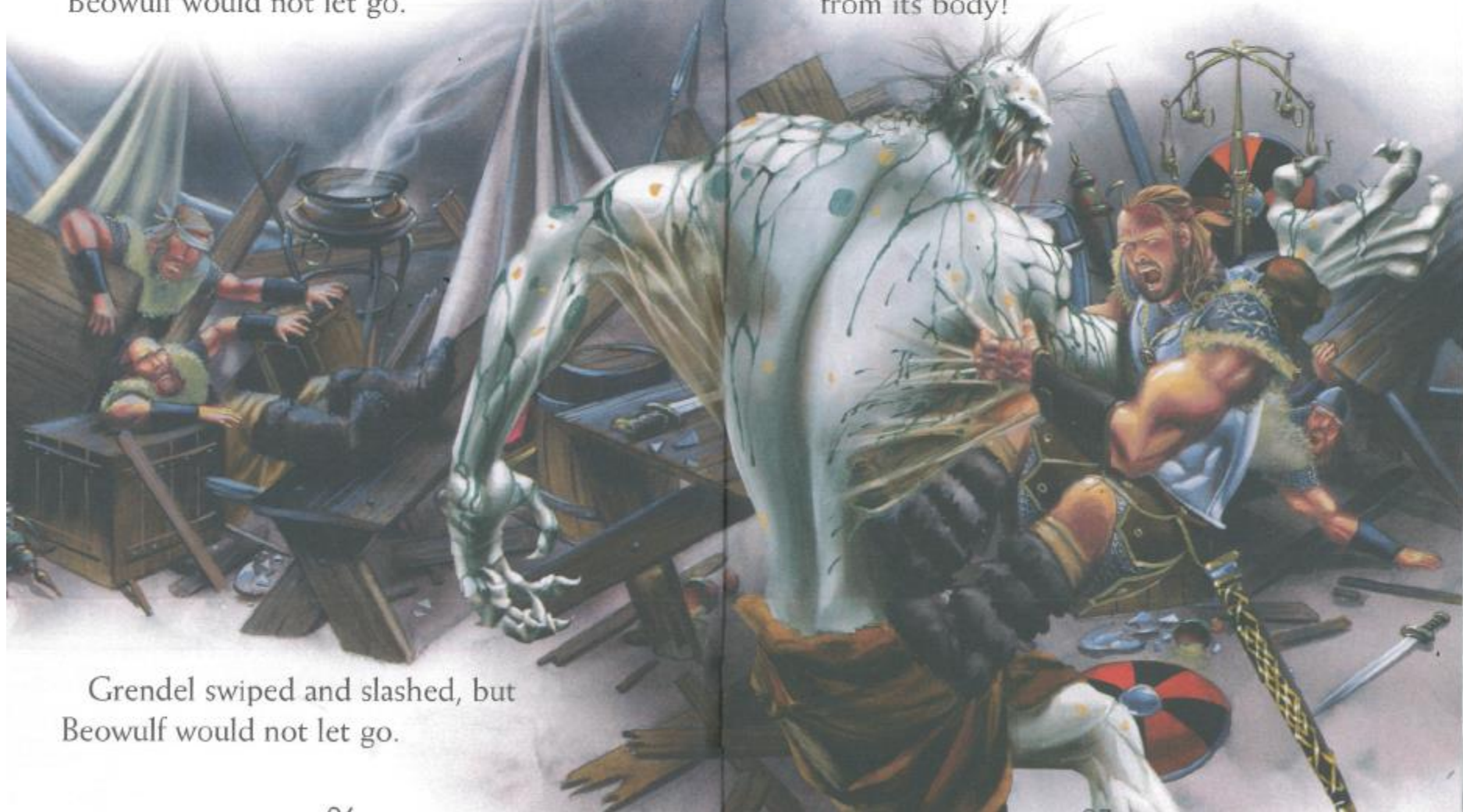


...except for one. Beowulf crouched in the shadows, his steely eyes fixed on the murdering monster.

Grendel reached for Leofric, and Beowulf pounced, grasping the monster's arm. Grendel writhed and thrashed, but Beowulf would not let go.

The hall shuddered. Benches shattered. But still Beowulf refused to let go. He tugged the monster's arm... and tore it from its body!

Grendel swiped and slashed, but Beowulf would not let go.



Grendel roared in pain. The monster smashed out of the hall and charged into the night, staggering across the moor.



Beowulf stood holding Grendel's dripping arm. He knew the monster would bleed to death. Grendel was defeated.



The next day, Heorot shook with laughter. King Hrothgar hosted a huge feast, and rewarded the Geats with golden treasures. But even as they celebrated Beowulf's victory, something else was stirring out on the moors...

Chapter 6

A new terror

"Beowulf! Come quickly!"

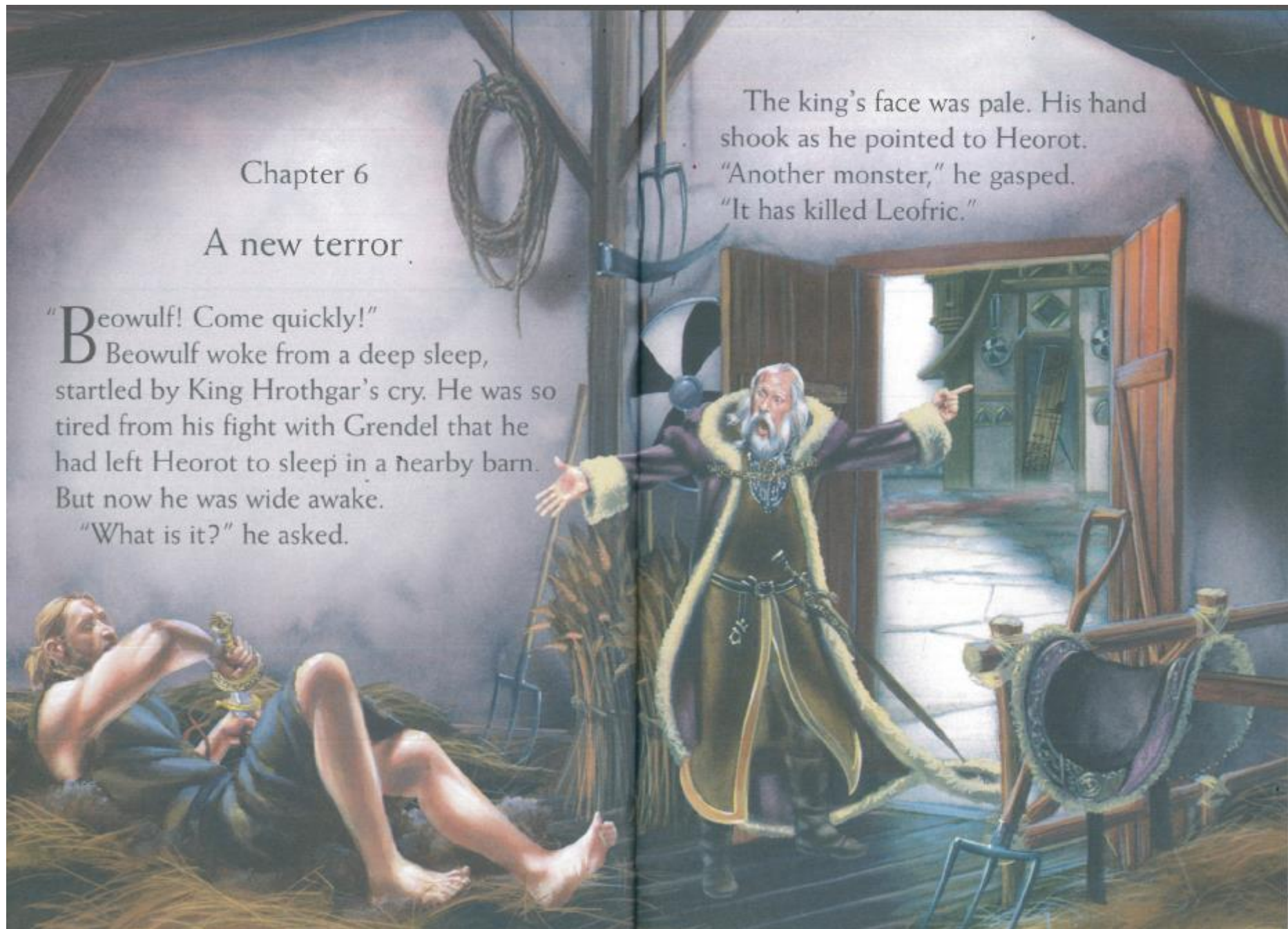
Beowulf woke from a deep sleep, startled by King Hrothgar's cry. He was so tired from his fight with Grendel that he had left Heorot to sleep in a nearby barn. But now he was wide awake.

"What is it?" he asked.

The king's face was pale. His hand shook as he pointed to Heorot.

"Another monster," he gasped.

"It has killed Leofric."



Beowulf raced to Heorot. The hall was dripping with blood and slime. "But Grendel is dead," Beowulf muttered. "It wasn't Grendel," one of the Danes told him. "It was his mother."



"We are doomed," said King Hrothgar. "Grendel's mother is pure evil. She lurks at the bottom of the Lake of Demons, in the darkest part of my kingdom."



Beowulf's lips set into a grim line. He slid on his helmet as Wiglaf handed him his sword. "Then that is where I will kill her," he said.