

# A Study Guide to *Grendel*

## Chapter 1

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### Words:

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|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Docile (7)       | 6. Hex (10)    | 11. Pyre (14)      |
| 2. Sycophantish (7) | 7. Coy (10)    | 12. Dogmatism (14) |
| 3. Trifling (8)     | 8. Thanos (12) | 13. Quavering (14) |
| 4. Mere (9)         | 9. Hoary (12)  |                    |
| 5. Fuliginous (10)  | 10. Dirge (13) |                    |

### Questions:

14. With what word does Grendel describe his war? What is its Greek root?
15. How many years has the war lasted so far?
16. Who/What is Grendel mad at at the opening? Why do you think he is so angry?
17. What is the King of the Humans' name (it's his hall)?
18. What do the humans do to try to turn their defeat into victory at the end of the chapter?
19. Why does this make Grendel so angry?

### Supplemental Readings

#### “The Mental Traveller” (William Blake)

20. Who are the two characters?
21. What is the basic conflict in the poem?
22. What is the initial fate of the boy?
23. Many things happen, but there seems to be an oscillation. Discuss the oscillations that you find in the poem.
24. How does the story “end”?
25. If this is the *mental* traveler, than what may the boy and woman represent? Are there conflicting parts of the self that may war against each other?
26. Where do you see an excerpt of this poem in *Grendel*?

#### *The Canterbury Tales*, “The General Prologue” (Geoffrey Chaucer)

27. When does Chaucer's poem begin?
28. What are his characters about to begin? (that is, why are they gathering?)
29. What month is it?
30. Which image does Chaucer use to describe how he knows which month it is?
31. How does Gardner make use of this image on the first page of *Grendel*?
32. Why might he be making this allusion?