

Chapter 12

Words:

1. grotesque

Questions:

2. How (and where) is Beowulf described like a dragon?
3. Who is Grendel's brother? How does this fit in with the overall astrological pattern?
4. Beowulf's words are in italics. Where have we heard these exact phrases before? (see ch. 5)
5. Explicate: "Though you murder the world, turn plains to stone, transmogrify life into I and it, strong searching roots will crack your cave and rain will cleanse it...Time is the mind, the hand that makes (fingers on harpstrings, hero-swords, the acts, the eyes of queens)." (notice that these are all phrases or images that we have seen before)
6. Grendel finally composes some decent poetry for the first time. What is the topic of the short poem? What is the theme?
7. How does Grendel's belief in "accident" blind him to the reality of "fate"?

Analysis:

8. Grendel's mother's prophecy came true: "Beware the fish." What is Gardner pointing out about the limitations of reason (especially in regards to our selves)?
9. Look at Grendel's language. How has it developed since his first forays into poetry back in chapter 6?
10. Grendel's final farewell is either a wish or a curse. Which is it? Why do you consider it so?

Notes:

The world is my bone-cave, I shall not want: Psalm 23 (KJV), The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want./ He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters./ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake./ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me./ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over./ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.