**Grendel Reading Guide Questions**

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| **Chapter 1-Aries, the Ram**  1.      Identify phrases that Grendel uses to describe himself.  What do these phrases reveal about him?  2.      Describe Grendel’s relationship with his mother.  3.      According to Grendel, what is man?  Identify:  litotes, epithets, similes, alliteration, kennings.  Identify references to trees and “machines.”  *Continue looking for these literary devices and recurring images throughout the book.*  ***Chapter 2-Taurus, the Bull***  1.      Explain the significance of the incident in which Grendel gets his foot caught in the tree roots.  2.      How does Grendel’s first meeting with men affect him?  Why does he fear them more than he fears the bull?  3.      How does Grendel’s experience with man impact his relationship with his mother?  4. What does Grendel mean, “the world is all pointless accident”?    Chapter 3:**Gemini, the Twins**  1.     What does Grendel learn about Hrothgar?  2.     What shocks Grendel about men’s behavior towards nature and towards each other?  3.     What is Grendel’s attitude towards poetry?  4.     What happens to Grendel at the end of the chapter?  Why?  What instances of twins do you find?   Chapter 4  **Cancer, the Crab**  1.       What does Grendel say about mor(t)ality?  How can this be?  2.       Why does Hrothgar build Heorot, the Hall of the Hart?  3.       What is the power of the “projected possible”?  4.       What impact does the story of Cain and Abel have on Grendel?  5.       What is Grendel’s “conversion”?  6.       What is the “presence” Grendel feels in the darkness?  Chapter 5—**Leo, the Lion**  1.       Why does Grendel visit the dragon?  2.       How is the dragon different from man and from Grendel?  3.       What does the dragon say about man?  4.       How does the dragon explain the role of the Shaper?  5.       What is the dragon’s advice?  *Explain*:  *“Knowledge is not cause*.”  *“Connectedness is the essence of everything*.”  *“The essence of life is to be found in the frustrations of established order*.”  6.       Explain how the dragon differentiates between “Importance” and “Expression.”  7.       How does Grendel “improve” men?  Chapter 6—Virgo (the Harvest Virgin)  1.       Explain why the dragon’s charm is a curse.  2.       What happens to Grendel as a result of his attack on Heorot?  3.       What is the impact of the Shaper’s song on Grendel?  4.       What is Grendel’s attitude towards the men in the meadhall?  5.       How does Grendel “shake” Unferth?  6.       What is Unferth’s attitude towards heroes?  Chapter 7—Libra, the Balance  1.       Who provides the “balance” in this chapter?  How?  2.       Why does Grendel not destroy all of Hart and Hrothgar?  3.       Find connections/parallels between Wealtheow and Grendel’s mother—between Wealtheow and  the Shaper…  4.       What happens to Unferth?  5.       Why does Grendel not kill Wealtheow?  6.       What does Grendel mean by “Balance is everything.”?   Chapter 8—Scorpio, the Scorpion  1.       How is Hrothulf like a scorpion?  2.       Explain Hrothgar’s dream.  3.       What role does Red Horse have in this chapter?  4.       What becomes apparent about man in this chapter?  Chapter 9—Sagittarius, the Archer  1.        Look for instances of irony in this chapter.  2.       What is Grendel’s opinion of religion?  3.       What is Ork’s opinion of the nature of evil?  4.       What is it about the fourth priest that disgusts Grendel?  5.       Find instances of foreshadowing in this chapter.  Chapter 10—Capricorn, the Goat  1.       What is wrong with the Shaper?  2.       What does Grendel mean by “Tedium is the worst pain”?  3.       How does Grendel feel about the goat?  Why?  4.       How has Grendel’s mother changed?  Chapter 11—Aquarius, the water bearer  1.       What impact do the strangers have on Grendel?  2.       To what does Grendel compare the strangers (Why might this be foreshadowing/symbolism?)?  3.       How does Grendel divide the world?  4.       What happens when Unferth challenges Beowulf about Breca?  5.       Why does Grendel go to hear the boasting?  What does he notice about the Danes’ reaction to the Geats?  6.       What does Grendel decide about Beowulf ?  Chapter 12—Pisces, the fish  1.       How and why is Grendel defeated?  2.       What is the role of illusion and words in Grendel’s death?  3.       What recurring images and lines can you identify from previous chapters?  4.       What are Grendel’s last words and what do they mean? |