



# Grendel's Mother: The Saga of the Wyrd-Wife

*By Susan Signe Morrison*

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## **Grendel's Mother: The Saga of the Wyrd-Wife** By Susan Signe Morrison

An amber bead. A gold and glass drinking horn. A ring engraved with Thor's hammer – all artifacts from a Germanic tribe that carved a space for itself through brutality and violence on a windswept land. Brimhild weaves peace and conveys culture to the kingdom, until the secret of her birth threatens to tear apart the fragile political stability. This is her story – the tale of Grendel's Mother. She is no monster as portrayed in the Old English epic, Beowulf. We learn her side of the story and that of her defamed child. We see the many passages of her life: the brine-baby who floated mysteriously to shore; the hall-queen presiding over the triumphant building of the golden hall Heorot and victim of sexual and political betrayal; the exiled mere-wife, who ekes out a marginal life by an uncanny bog as a healer and contends with the menacing Beowulf; and the seer, who prophesizes what will occur to her adopted people. We learn how the invasion by brutal men is not a fairy tale, but a disaster doomed to cycle relentlessly through human history. Only the surviving women can sing poignant laments, preserve a glittering culture, and provide hope for the future.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

In *Grendel's Mother: the Saga of the Wyrd-Wife*, an emotionally rich retelling of *Beowulf*, Susan Signe Morrison reveals the tragically human monsters obscured by the heroic bravado of the original poem. Only a scholar and poet steeped in Anglo-Saxon literature and culture could conceive of such a lyrical extension of the poem from the perspective of the women in the mead hall. Reading it opened the poem to me as never before. What a gift! *Grendel's Mother* is sure to become an integral part of every class on *Beowulf*. (Candace Robb, author of the Owen Archer Mystery Series and, as Emma Campion, *A Triple Knot 2015*)

This fascinating narrative is to readers today what John Gardner's *Grendel* was to readers of the 1970s. *Grendel's Mother* gives extra pleasure to lovers of medieval culture, since Morrison has enriched her novel with numerous treasure pieces taken from the earliest literatures of northern Europe. Poignant and yet exhilarating, Morrison's story surrounding the women of *Beowulf* has a universal appeal that will keep readers captivated from beginning to end. (Haruko Momma, Professor of English, New York University, author of *The Composition of Old English Poetry Feb 2015*)

Morrison's historical novel explores the legend of *Beowulf*. On the shore of the land of the Scyldings arrives a baby found in a boat of foreign make, swaddled in salt-encrusted blankets and accompanied only by a silver spoon, an illuminated book, and a piece of gold jewelry. The foundling is taken in by a local fisherman and his wife, who name her Brimhild. The young king, Hrothgar, sanctions the adoption, though the king's mother is sure that the alien girl will bring only misfortune to the land. From a local "mere-woman" Brimhild learns the lore of the land and its magic. From a traveling Irish monk she learns of a religion that worships a pitiable, gentle god. Brimhild grows to adulthood, rising to a place of prominence among her new people: she becomes the wife of Hrothgar and oversees the construction of Heorot, an immense hall that becomes the pride of the Scyldings. She bears the king a son, Grendel, a sensitive child she raises secretly in the faith of Christ. Yet Brimhild sits at a crossroads between old ideas and new ones, and the truth of her origins threatens her placement at the head of her adopted tribe. Her betrayal and fall from grace give birth to a new set of stories, one in which she and her son are defamed for all time. Morrison writes in alliterative, lyric prose that evokes the Old English of her source text: "There she saw the soft seaweed, barnacled bed, of a marine monster. Leaving her work, approaching with caution, she listened for linnets along the lime lane." An incredible world is spun out of blunt, staccato words: a world of customs and objects, of heroes and faiths, and, of course, monsters. Morrison manages to update the medieval morality of the original poem while preserving its mournful sense of the old ways passing away. An enchanting, poignant reimagining of *Beowulf*. <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/susan-signe-morrison/grendels-mother/> (*Kirkus Reviews, Kirkus Reviews Issue: Sept. 1st, 2015*)

#### About the Author

Professor of English at Texas State University, Susan Signe Morrison lives in Austin, Texas, and writes on topics lurking in the margins of history, ranging from recently uncovered diaries of a teenaged girl in World War II to medieval women pilgrims, excrement in the Middle Ages, and waste.

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**Charles Montiel:**

This book untitled Grendel's Mother: The Saga of the Wyrd-Wife to be one of several books this best seller in this year, here is because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit into it. You will easily to buy this particular book in the book retail outlet or you can order it through online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, because you can read this book in your Cell phone. So there is no reason to you to past this guide from your list.

**Mary Muncy:**

Grendel's Mother: The Saga of the Wyrd-Wife can be one of your basic books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining however delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to get every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing Grendel's Mother: The Saga of the Wyrd-Wife nevertheless doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource information that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information can easily drawn you into brand new stage of crucial contemplating.

**Clarine Davidson:**

In this time globalization it is important to someone to acquire information. The information will make anyone to understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended to you is Grendel's Mother: The Saga of the Wyrd-Wife this e-book consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some analysis when he makes this book. That is why this book ideal all of you.

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