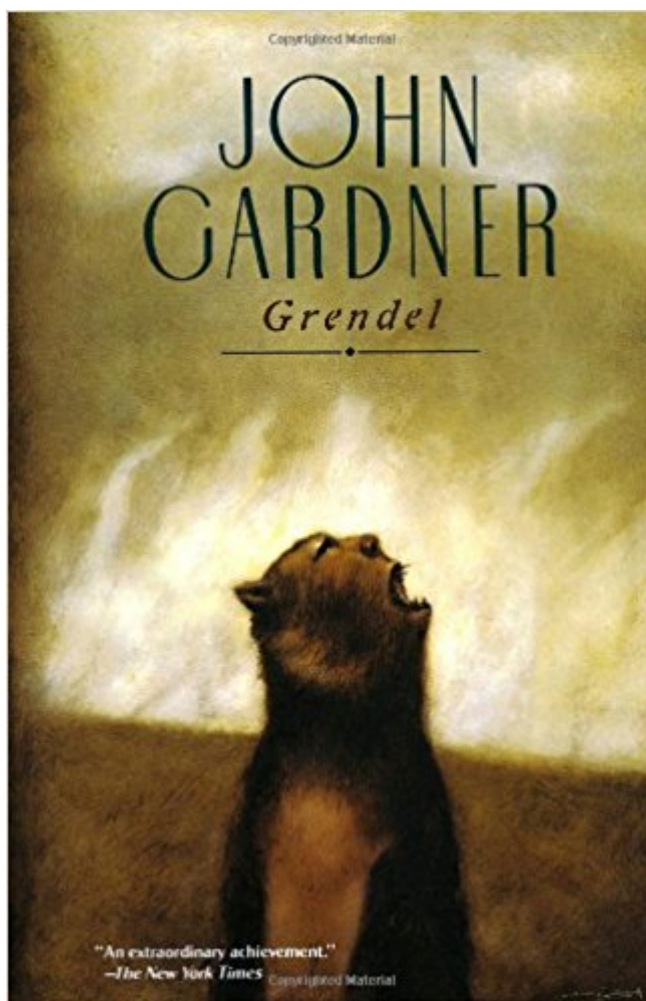


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Grendel



Synopsis

The first and most terrifying monster in English literature, from the great early epic *Beowulf*, tells his own side of the story in this frequently banned book. This classic and much lauded retelling of *Beowulf* follows the monster Grendel as he learns about humans and fights the war at the center of the Anglo Saxon classic epic. This is the book William Gass called "one of the finest of our contemporary fictions."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grendel is a beautiful and heartbreaking modern retelling of the *Beowulf* epic from the point of view of the monster, Grendel, the villain of the 8th-century Anglo-Saxon epic. This book benefits from both of Gardner's careers: in addition to his work as a novelist, Gardner was a noted professor of medieval literature and a scholar of ancient languages.

George Guidall's crusty but spirited narration is perfectly suited for the monster Grendel. Gardner's 1971 classic takes the Anglo Saxon *Beowulf* epic and uses varying translations of the poem and other writings from the period to tell the story from the poor monster's viewpoint. Most first-person narratives translate well to the audio format, and *Grendel* especially enchants, casting a spell not unlike a grown-up "Lord of the Rings." The monster observes humans from a revealing and telling vantage. Just like a child in the schoolyard, Grendel picks up certain curse words and takes joy in repeating them. This has resulted in Gardner's book being challenged at the many schools where it is rightfully part of the curriculum. Guidall's voice is familiar enough for a still-fresh tale. This is

storytelling at its best. ?Gerald A. Notaro, Univ. of South Florida, St. Petersburg Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

This is one of my favorite novels, and, in my opinion, a masterpiece that should be read by anyone who enjoys reading fiction. The way Gardner takes a character that you thought you knew and adds layers upon layers upon layers of depth to him is absolutely astounding. This novel is probably the best character analysis I've ever read. It's not light reading, and it's not a typical action-heavy fantasy novel, but it is one of the most intellectual and thought provoking fantasy novels out there. (I would recommend you read Beowulf before reading this novel if you really want to fully understand its greatness.)

This book has been described as "a triumph" - and it is. Gardiner's unique perspective transports us into the world of the legendary monster of Beowulf, from the perspective of that monster, and in so-doing, takes the reader on a journey which is utterly unexpected. Yes, it's unusual to read a book written from what we perceive to be the perspective of the "bad guy", and that in itself is fascinating. But this book covers a great deal more of that as the narrative progresses. The power of words and legend, the very nature of good and evil, interwoven with humour and the observations of a true antihero, whilst he rationalises internally, deals with his mute mother, mocks and taunts humans between murdering them, and tries to match wits with a fatalistic, philosophising dragon (sounds stranger than it is, in context) - this book covers a great deal of ground. One of my true favourite books - Very much worth your time and effort.

This book is incredible. Grendel is a sly, poetic, introspective "monster" who embodies the monster that is in all of us. If you are a fan of Poe, Vonnegut, Orwell, Wells, or you just enjoy mind-blowing fiction then read this. ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL.

Gardner reminds readers that without a monster there can be no hero, and without some sympathy for that monster there can be no story. Beyond those simple determinants lie a bigger question, to which Gardner provides some elegant insights. Can we achieve human progress without the company of an occasional monster? And if so, why does God in His infinite wisdom allow monsters and evil to exist? Finally, does consciousness of monstrous behavior alter our reactions to it? Should we think of Grendel differently than we do of say the Great White Shark in Jaws? Perhaps the lesson to be learnt here is that if we wait and see we may witness the rise of the

Superman who chooses to rise above the common morass of life on Earth, and thereby create a myth that describes the boundaries of what we can become, for better or for worse.

I spent seven years earning a PhD in English, and this "novel" gave me the worst flashbacks to that time. Grendel's point of view was just a gimmick to rehash all the philosophies of being that clogged up the 70s and 80s and prevented narrative from delighting. Give me the original Beowulf.

I've reread this several times since getting it first in the early '70s. He writes like some people speak. Not exactly stream-of-consciousness, but he plays with words the way only people hearing them would. Wonderful book. You'll enjoy it -- In a long line of books revealing the humanity of the monsters of our cultures. Are they more human than we?

This book is roughly based on "Beowulf" and centralizes around the nemesis of Beowulf himself--the monster Grendel. This a simply-written book that is filled with Grendel's despair and cynicism about life. The book, if you're willing to really read it, is deeply philosophical and says a lot about that famous "human condition." An outstanding book

I read this book my senior year of high school and had to purchase it. John Gardner does a fantastic job at looking from an extremely complex point of view from the monster of Beowulf, Grendel. For me, the existential and nihilistic nature of this book made it all the while worth reading. It's not the happiest book. It doesn't have plot twist after plot twist. It isn't filled with action. But what it does have, is a deep view of the world, an omnipotent dragon, and a story that's hard not to enjoy.

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Grendel vs. The Shadow Grendel

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