



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

*Susan Signe Morrison*

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