

Heroism and *Beowulf*

Main Entry: he-ro 'hir-(")O, 'hE-(")rO Function: noun Inflected Form(s): plural heroes

Etymology: Latin heros, from Greek hErOs Date: 14th century

1 a : a mythological or legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability b : an illustrious warrior c : a man admired for his achievements and noble qualities

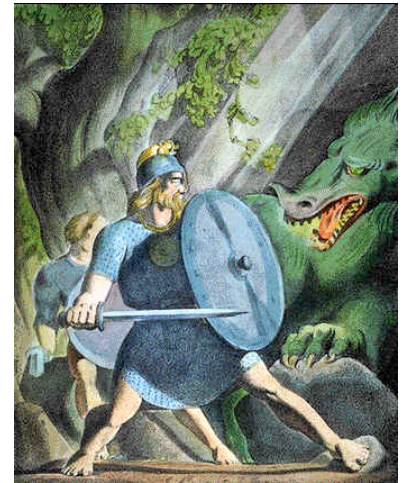
d : one that shows great courage 2 a : the principal male character in a literary or dramatic work b : the central figure in an event, period, or movement 3 plural usually heroes :

SUBMARINE 2

4 : an object of extreme admiration and devotion : IDOL



News Item: In 1982 a Air Florida plane crashed as it attempted to take off from Washington's National Airport. The plane landed in the ice-covered Potomac river, and rescuers were there within minutes. Because of the temperature of the water it was crucial to get survivors out of the water as quickly as possible. Helicopters lowered ropes and harnesses down to the water to those who were clinging to the ice or wreckage. One man was given the chance to be pulled to safety on three separate occasions. However, on each occasion he gave the harness and the chance at rescue to someone else. When the helicopter came back the fourth time, the man had gone under, a victim of hypothermia.



It seems to me that there is heroism and then there is *heroism*. There is the kind of heroism that manifests itself in cutting off Grendel's head, and then there is the kind that Beowulf talks about when he says that he refused to leave Brecca because he was committed to him..

You are to go through *Beowulf* (what you have read up to this point), scouring it for both the more obvious, active kinds of heroism as well as though acts that might take a more inward kind of courage. Another example of this "inward" heroism might be seen in Beowulf's decision to not use weapons against Grendel, and of course his more obvious choice to fight Grendel in the first place.

You have been given the account of one of the heroes of 9/11. Before you begin this assignment – read that account, underlining what you see as acts of heroism. Then, as you are finding your examples of heroism in *Beowulf*, try to find similar acts (moments) of heroism in the account of the modern hero.

Put your findings from the two readings and presentation (*Beowulf* and the 9/11 Hero) on the chart provided. All of the column headings should be obvious except perhaps for the one entitled "Modern/Anglo-Saxon." This column asks you to decide (do your best) whether your heroic quality is a modern heroic quality (meaning that we would find it heroic or Anglo-Saxon (it fits in with what we have discussed about Anglo-Saxon heroism)). Try to put similar of heroism following each other on the chart – for these and for some others you may end up writing AS/Mod for the type of heroism (meaning that both Anglo-Saxons and modern people would find that act heroic. Everyone should fill in their own chart (talk, talk, about it); turn in one chart with all of your names on it (and period – I take 5 points off if you are missing your period)

When looking for heroic qualities consider the following:

- Try to find at least ½ of the more subtle inwardly heroic deeds or qualities
- Try to have ½ of your heroic qualities from *Beowulf*, ½ from the modern hero
- Minimize (no more than 5) the number of acts or qualities mentioned in class
- words & deeds, inner strength, fighting impossible odds
- spread out your answers – use up to what you have read in *Beowulf* as well as the entire attached sheet.
- DON'T STRETCH IT! There are enough heroic acts and qualities described that you don't have to stretch ones that probably don't fit.
- Make sure your heading, period, and full names are on your paper.

Name: Benjamin "Keefe" Clark Age: 39 Residence: Brooklyn, New York

Story: A former Marine, Clark was working September 11 as the sole corporate chef for Fiduciary Trust's 250 employees on the South Tower's 96th floor. Clark urged hundreds of people to head down the stairs, only to die himself in the building's collapse. Known for his big smile and even bigger heart, Clark was survived by his wife and five children.

In their words: "I still can't look at him in the past tense because I look at my children and the legacy is still there -- the giving, the caring, the loving person." -- Lashawn Clark, Keefe's wife

Special order -- Family, friends remember corporate chef turned hero

Lashawn Clark, here with Keefe, said he had a big heart: "He would take his last and give it to you."

NEW YORK (CNN) -- The smile said it all.

It spoke volumes when Benjamin "Keefe" Clark personally greeted, cooked for and served meals to more than 250 Fiduciary Trust employees on the South Tower's 96th floor. Or when Keefe gave assistance and advice to people who invariably came to him in time of need. And it was loudest when he played with or cooked for his five children and wife in their Brooklyn home.

"Keefe was always trying to make life better for others. He always looked out for everyone else besides himself," said Channing Thornton, a childhood pal who like many others, he said, called Clark his best friend. "Wherever Keefe is now, he's probably making a good meal, and smiling." His family, colleagues and friends all paint a picture of a talented, personable and strong man. Clark's selflessness, in fact, may have cost him his life on September 11, according to several people who worked alongside him.

Bibi Conrad, senior vice president with Fiduciary, said Clark was probably responsible for the escape of hundreds of his company's employees "because he would have insisted they get out quickly." After several hundred people safely fled downstairs, Clark reportedly went back to lock up and make sure everyone had left. "That sort of decision-making and caring made the difference," Conrad said.

Lashawn Clark is not surprised by the heroic stories she has heard in the past 12 months about her husband's final moments. "He had a big heart," she said. "That was the type of person he was. He would take his last and give it to you."

Chaz Clarke, left, holds a mammoth check with his mother Lashawn and United Negro College Fund President William H. Gray III. The UNCF gave Chaz a full scholarship to Morehouse College in Atlanta. The 800 people who attended Keefe Clark's memorial service last October saw two groups of men in uniform marching to honor a fallen comrade: Marines in full military garb and about 30 chefs adorned in their trademark white hats and jackets.

Clark served in the Gulf War before returning home to New York to pursue cooking, a passion and skill he picked up from his mother, according to Thornton. He joined Sodexo, one of the world's largest food service companies, and rose to become an executive chef for corporation clients.

At Fiduciary, he served as the lone cook charged with supplying, presenting and preparing hundreds of meals each day using just three microwaves. While his cooking talents were renowned, his personal skills -- addressing everyone by name, cooking to their tastes and greeting them all with a smile -- set him apart, said his bosses and customers.

"He was one of my favorites," said Patricia Hannigan, who served as Clark's district manager at Sodexo for five years. "He had a great temperament, was cooperative no matter what and was always very respectful." Of course, Clark had his own favorite diners: his children. Every day their meals would be custom-made, ready-to-eat when they came home from school.

"He used to make a mean meatloaf," said Keefe's son Taj. "I just liked everything he made."

The Clarks have heard many heroic accounts of Keefe's final moments. Conrad said Keefe urgently called on people to leave their offices and head down the stairs -- after the neighboring North Tower was struck but before United Flight 175 slammed into the South Tower.

Son Chaz Clark said he was told his father and three maintenance workers were last seen helping a woman in a wheelchair get down the stairs. Whatever happened, Keefe's friends, colleagues and family said his death left a major hole in all their lives.

"He was so highly regarded and so warm," Conrad said. "He will loom very large in our memories." His son Sean painted a mural in his father's honor, calling Keefe a hero who did everything he could to help others -- "all the time, every time."

Chaz Clarke emulated his father's sense of service on September 11, immediately heading to hospitals to offer his assistance. "I couldn't stand by and watch it happen," said Chaz, a freshman at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, and one of the first recipients of a United Negro College Fund scholarship for children of September 11 victims. "I had to do something."

Lashawn Clark said she has gotten some solace from the stories about her husband's exploits on September 11. But she gets the most strength, she said, from his children. "I still can't look at him in the past tense because I look at my children and the legacy is still there -- the giving, the caring, the loving person," Lashawn Clark said.

