

A Review of Grendel's Cave

Review by Blake Webster

"A literature teacher's bad dream?"

If an English literature teacher were to write an online game then this is what he would dream up. With that said, Grendel's Cave can be strangely compelling and addicting, assuming you do not mind dying over and over and over again to elements that are not fully understood.

Graphics: 2/10.

Grendel's Cave's graphics are worse than being stuck in a time warp. The game was originally written in 1997 and the graphics were weak then and have not changed much in 13 or so years. They are not even of a consistent style, nor the font used on the graphics consistent or always legible. If you expect your online game to come with graphics with any thought at all then Grendel's Cave is not for you.

Story: 8/10.

The story line is literally classic and exceeds most other MMOs. How can you beat a story 1,500 years old and retold many times over, in many different styles, including novels, comic books, movies, opera, theatre and others, in the last couple of generations. Grendel's Cave stays pretty close to the original Beowulf myth, admittedly with many anachronistic elements, and if you are interested in Beowulf, Norse mythology or Norse culture at all then there is something in the game for you.

Gameplay: 7/10.

Game play is fairly interesting and complex and is different from most other MMOs in that it has a real and final objective, to kill Grendel.

It involves creating Thaners, the player characters, killing monsters, increasing your value and stats and collecting items. You obtain gold rings by selling items or Singing of Deeds for King Hrothgar. You gain magical abilities by visiting the Witch or through your magical items. This leads you to quests where you earn amulets, trade in those earned amulets for Yggdrasil, a super-amulet, which allows you to kill Grendel. Killing Grendel is the ultimate objective of this game. After killing Grendel, you can kill Grendel's Mother, and then the Dragon, but most players skip these secondary objectives because you really gain nothing from them.

There are multiple kingdoms available to play, with Grendel in each kingdom. There are several different kingdom types. They run from beginner to advanced, with increasing difficulty. You can purchase personal kingdoms that you can configure to your liking. Grendel's Cave sometimes runs tournaments but they are so difficult and tedious that, for the average player, they are simply not that much fun. The game only allows player killing in the more advanced kingdoms.

Interactions among other players: 2/10.

There is very little here. It is difficult to interact with other players in the game, and even in the PK kingdoms, with some of the advanced items in the game, it becomes impossible

to interact. This was better in older versions of the game. Most players use outside chat and forums to communicate. The game just does not accommodate this.

Overall: 6.

If you are interested in Beowulf, Norse Mythology or do not mind bad graphics then you might like this game. Just beware that you will die a lot and that death is a real inconvenience. Do not expect that to change anytime soon. The creators of this game do not care if you play or not and seem to be more interested in creating a game that frustrates the hell out of you just to the brink of giving up. It can be fun and addicting but I must warn you, you will die a lot under seemingly unfair conditions.

Reviewer's Score: 6/10, Originally Posted: 4/21/10