



David Harewood plays Scorann – Thane of Wisdeth

A born warrior, fearsome fighter and man of great honour. Varni blood pulses deeply through Scorann's veins but, to strengthen the Alliance, he did his duty and married a Wisdeth bride, of a farming tribe, had farming children, and henceforth, served their sedate tribe as Thane leaving behind his life of danger, bloodshed, and exhilaration, thus abdicating his Varni legacy, to his younger brother Rate (David Ajala).

Q: Who is Scorann?

"Scorann is a nobleman and born warrior. One of the leaders of a very important clan. At the start of the series Rheda (Joanne Whalley), the new female ruler of Herot, needs the support of the heads of all of these different tribes. Scorann decides to ride out to give his support. But on the way he is ambushed and taken prisoner.

"He is such a wonderful character to play and I loved his spirit. As a king he has been fairly mollycoddled. So despite being captured with his life in danger, he thoroughly enjoys being back among fighting men. Back out in the wild, into the fray, in combat, getting his hands dirty with the excitement of trying to find a way out."

Q: What attracted you to the part?

"I wanted to play the role, first of all because of the director Jon East and a producer I'd worked with before, Stephen Smallwood, who did *The Vice* many years ago. So I knew I was on familiar ground and that both of them do good work.

"What a character to play. A swashbuckling, heroic nobleman. I had a great deal of fun filming it. I've been doing all of this CIA-type stuff like *Homeland* over the last couple of years and it was good to do something so different. I also haven't done much work in the UK in that time. Most of it has been in America. So it was good to get back and do something British and earthy.

"I hope *Beowulf* will be a big hit with viewers. It's very different with a wonderfully diverse cast. It's great to see so many young black and Asian actors getting an opportunity in a costume drama like this. It felt modern and very representative.

"The location is extraordinary out in County Durham and Weardale near Newcastle upon Tyne. Amazing landscapes and very different to anything I've been used to recently. It was an invigorating experience all round. I visited the main location in the quarry, high up in the Weardale fells, but I didn't actually shoot there. I was a bit further up the road in an even more barren landscape. It was an extraordinary landscape. Very inspiring.

"*Beowulf* has a brilliant cast and Kieran Bew is a fantastic leading man. ITV has put a lot of resources into drama and that can only be applauded. This is a different kind of drama for them and it deserves to be a big success."

Q: Did you have lots of action scenes?

"I had to do a bit of fighting with lots of running and action. It wasn't the easiest landscape to run through. There were branches and huge puddles of mud. You didn't know where your footing was so you did have to be careful. It would have been very easy to go over on an ankle. But I found it very enjoyable to film.

"I ended up in a river. Up to my neck in water. I wasn't looking forward to that day but by the time we got to it, it was fine. It was just like doing an action movie. A couple of weeks before they had experienced sideways sleet and it had been absolutely freezing. But my two weeks were just glorious sunshine and I managed to skip the worst of the weather. Even getting in that water wasn't too bad.

"In one scene Scorann and Slean, played by Ed Speleers, are tied together and they roll down a sheer slope. We didn't do the entire stunt together but we did do the beginning of it. I literally pull him down a very steep ravine.

"Just walking along that ravine was enough to put your heart in your mouth. It was very steep. One slip and that would have been the end of you. So diving off the side was very exciting. Unfortunately for Ed, he banged his head on my chest at one point and nearly knocked himself out. But he was OK.

"We were also both strapped up by our wrists and hands to a wooden structure after the two characters are captured. They did their best to make it comfortable and didn't go too hard on us too much."

Q: What does Scorann look like?

"It's all part of the completely bizarre life of an actor. One minute you're in a suit and tie. The next you're donning a wig and wearing furs. My kids thought it was hilarious when I showed them the pictures of my costume.

"Scorann has a fantastic outfit. Bravo to the costume designers who came up with it. I was often stapled into it and bits were added. An extraordinary costume and an extraordinary look, which we actually ended up having to tone down a little bit."

Q: An actor's life can involve lots of travel?

"The minute you are finished with Beowulf you're on a plane to Los Angeles to play an alien-hunting character in a secret government agency for Supergirl. It's such a big contrast. I've had an amazing time. You just never know what you're going to do next and I wouldn't wish to do anything else but be an actor.

"But time away from home is particularly difficult when you've got a family. Back in the day I probably would have stayed on location wherever I was. Now I try and get home whenever I can, rather than sitting in another hotel. That's why I've had to travel quite so much in the last year or so. But it's worth it when you get home and have the chance to see your kids."

Q: You were quoted once as saying you would probably be driving a bus by now if you had not been cast as David Estes in Homeland. Did you mean that?

"It was a bit of a flippant remark. But I was certainly on my last dollar. I hadn't worked for a long time and was struggling to find any roles of any significance in the UK. So if it hadn't been for Homeland I would certainly be struggling. I was very close to throwing in the towel.

"I was very lucky that both my agent and my manager found Homeland and managed to get my tape to them. I haven't looked back since. It's just been a wonderful ride. I've grown as an actor and I haven't stopped working since doing that. So I've been very fortunate and very lucky."

Q: How would you cope if you were transported back to the Dark Ages?

"I would absolutely hate it. I love my comforts. I like my iPhone, my 4G. I'd very rapidly go out of my mind. I'm very much a modern day creature. I think I'd go insane. I'm not one of these hardy souls at all."

Q: Beowulf is one of our earliest stories. Why is storytelling important?

"We need stories. Right from the crib we all listen to stories. It helps us develop, share and grow. We see ourselves in these stories. Some you can learn from, some we can grow from. There will never be a shortage of stories, whether they're in short form format or in songs, poems or drama. They help us experience life. We know we are not alone when we see ourselves in these stories because somebody else has been through something similar. It brings us all together."