



Alexander Dreymon: Lord of the Kings



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April 14, 2023, 2:46PM | [Updated 25 minutes ago](#)



Seven kings will die for Netflix, but Alexander Dreymon, AKA “Utreð of Bebbanburg”, charismatic lead of the 5-season hit Netflix show *The Last Kingdom*, and the series-closure film, “Seven Kings Must Die,” is just getting started.

Produced by Carnival Films, ‘Seven Kings, is based on the Saxon Song books by Bernard Cornwell that inspired “The Last Kingdom” successful action/drama series created by Stephen Butchard, charting the birth of England through the eyes of Utreð, a Saxon raised by Danes with a lifelong quest to regain his

lands. The title emerges from a prophecy that these 'kings' stand in the way of unity.

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'Seven Kings picks up about a decade after The Last Kingdom ends. Edward the newly-dead Saxon king who had brokered peace-leaves two heirs Aethelstan and Aelfweard. Uhtred is, as usual-at the axis of action-finally ruling over Northumbria from Bebbanburg. He is loath to pledge his land to the throne, having just recovered it after a very long struggle detailed in The Last Kingdom's 46 episodes.

Making matters worse, a scary new Danish Warrior King with a hideous beard arrives-he is Anlaf-and he plans to seize control before a new king is crowned. Uhtred offers his sword to crown-contender Aethelstan who was like a son to him but sees with his own eyes the young prince being manipulated [no pun] by Ingilmundr, a double-dealing, sanctimonious snake of a warrior priest-who seduces Aethelstan and uses their gay 'sin' as emotional blackmail.

Aethelstan, blinded by lust/love, turns against Uhtred, but the worst is yet to come. The alliance of kings seeks Uhtred's help to save Britain, he must choose between kin or the dream of a united kingdom. Alexander Dreymon leads the excellent cast to a very satisfying finale.

Known for his kindness and charm, Dreymon is consistent in his gratitude to the loyal fans of the show and his character Uhtred of Bebbanburg. The enthusiastic and enormous fanbase pushed The Last Kingdom to the top of the Netflix charts. The Last Kingdom was in the Top 10 in 62 countries in 2022 with 63,543, 000 hours viewed within weeks of release. Expectations for Seven Kings Must Die are high,

after the April preview in NYC, Dreymon is in the UK to promote it. We're on ZOOM as he drives through the English countryside to meet with cast members-friends- he's worked with over the past 8 years.

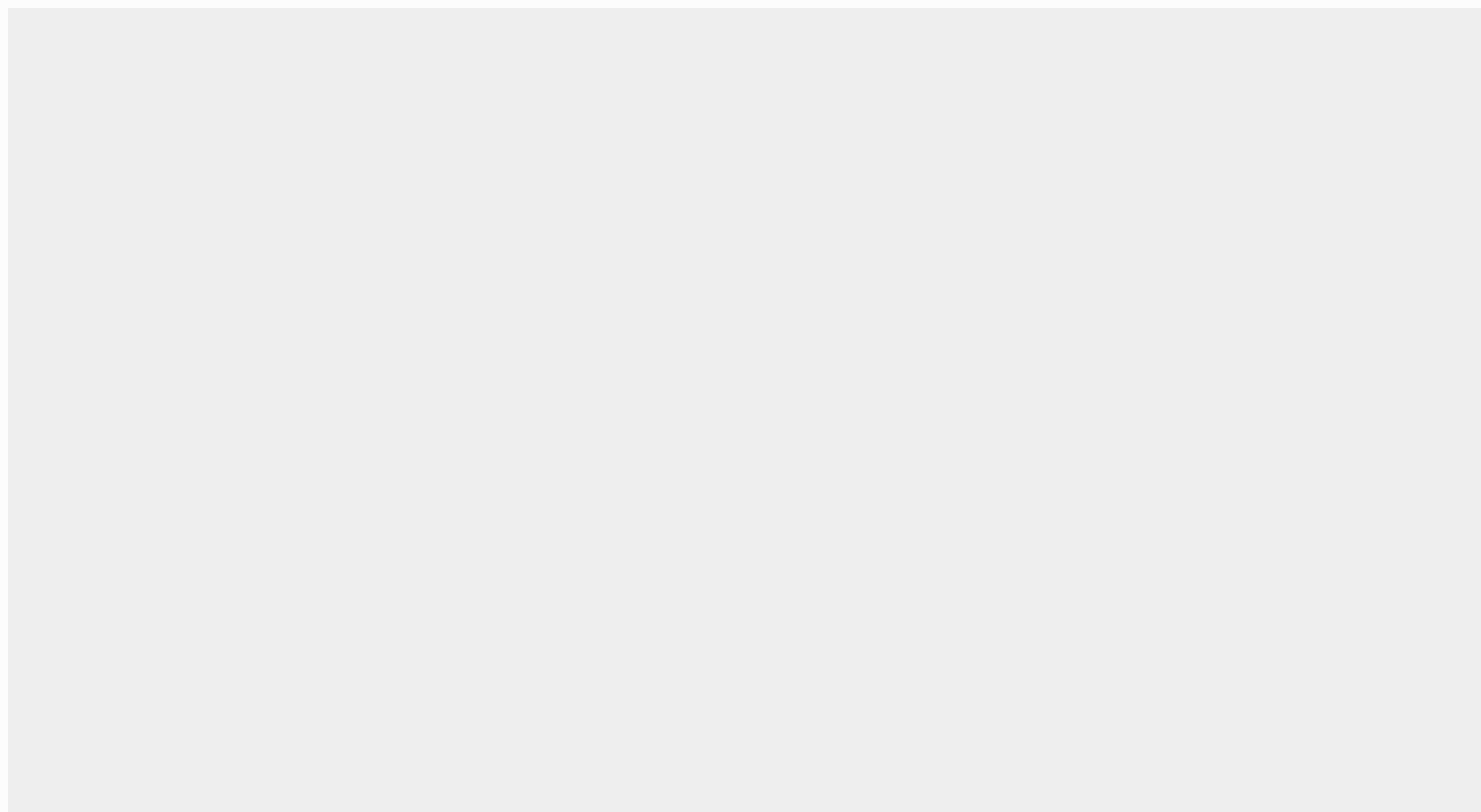
Dreymon's exclusive interview with *La Prensa Sonoma* is dedicated to his huge Spanish-speaking fan base. His supporters in the US, Mexico, Spain, and Latin America were among the first to saddle up in 2015 with Ured and his loyal compadres Finan [Mark Rowan] and Sihtric [Arnas Fedaravicius] as they survived the unimaginable setbacks, heartbreaks, narrow escapes, and victories wielding swords, shields and smiles in silver studded leather and shaggy fur.

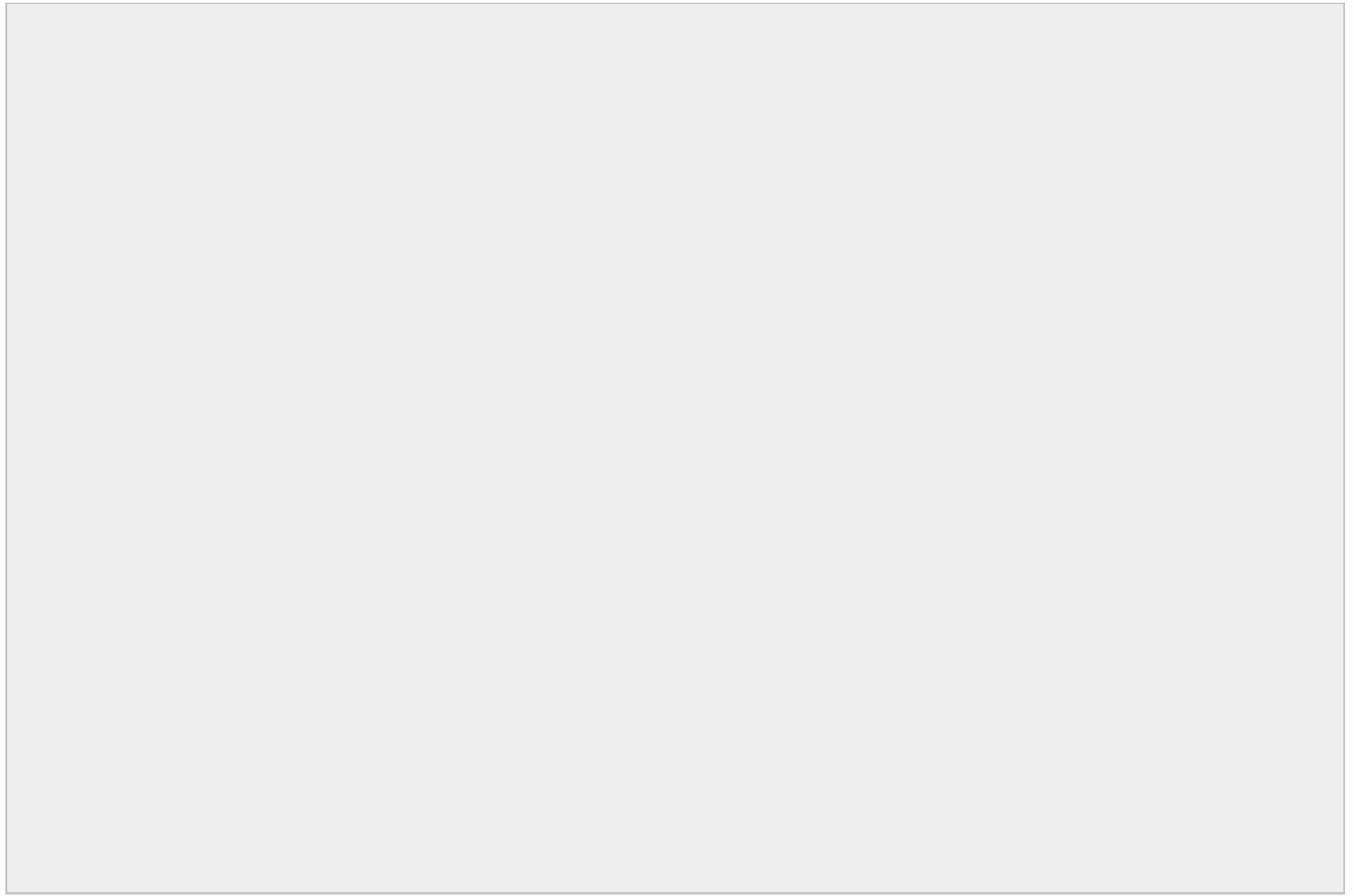
The well-paced blend of clever and elegant dialogue, survival skills, historical shockers, crazy haircuts, well drawn, powerful female characters and conniving, double-dealing villains on all sides-royal, religious, Pagan, Saxon, and Dane, kept viewers enthralled. Perfect pandemic escapist fare; the harsh 9th century mediaeval world seemed only slightly more treacherous than a pre-vaccine visit to the grocery store. It put things in perspective.

Latino followers on Instagram and Twitter can't get enough of Alexander Dreymon and his international crew. Tri-lingual [French, German, English] Dremon plans to learn Spanish.

"I start learning then I get distracted by a project, but I really am in love with the language and will achieve that."

He'd also love to work in Spain in the future.





The Last Kingdom: Seven Kings Must Die. (L to R) Alexander Dreymon as Uhtred, Arnas Fedaravicius as Sihtric and Mark Rowley as Finan in The Last Kingdom: Seven Kings Must Die. Cr. Courtesy of Netflix © 2023

“I know that we have a lot of fans in Mexico, Spain, and Latin America as well and, it's so exciting. I went for a press tour to Mexico after the first series came out, and that was just one of the best experiences! There was so much enthusiasm and passion! Reaching out to the audience, it's a no brainer to me because we're not one of those shows that had a huge advertising machine behind us. We were really where we are today because of the loyalty of our fans and what they've done for us. It's all such a such a pleasure because we just have the best fans! There's so much love and support there. I've never encountered any online toxicity, which is very rare.”

The interview morphs into a conversation about his journey and the parallels with his iconic character Uhtred of Bebbanburg, a man torn between two cultures. A European gentleman, Dreymon is curious, kind, direct and insightful.

Born in Germany under the sign of Aquarius, February 7, 1983, Dreymon looks a decade younger than his 40 years; that inner maturity is his secret weapon. Dreymon grew up in the United States, France, and Switzerland.

A martial artist, he learned to ride horses while living in South Dakota. He studied in Paris, then trained for three years at the Drama Centre in London.

Dreymon did indie films and a guest star role on American Horror Story before his big break. Dreymon's complex, star-making role as Lord Utred, son of Utred of Bebbanburg began with a taped audition in 2014 and a humble BBC series order that began shooting in 2015.

The show's seasoned producers, Nigel Marchant, and Gareth Neame of Carnival had scored hugely with Downton Abbey. They undertook The Last Kingdom with gusto. When the show launched in 2015, UK publication The Guardian posed the question "Is there enough to separate this BBC series from Vikings and Game of Thrones?"

The resounding final fan consensus: Hell, yes! The show appeals to both history fans and action lovers. The writing is amazing, but it's fair to note fan's rowdy enthusiasm is largely due to the charismatic, layered, understated portrayal of Utred, in the words of Dreymon "A ruffian with progressive values and honor."

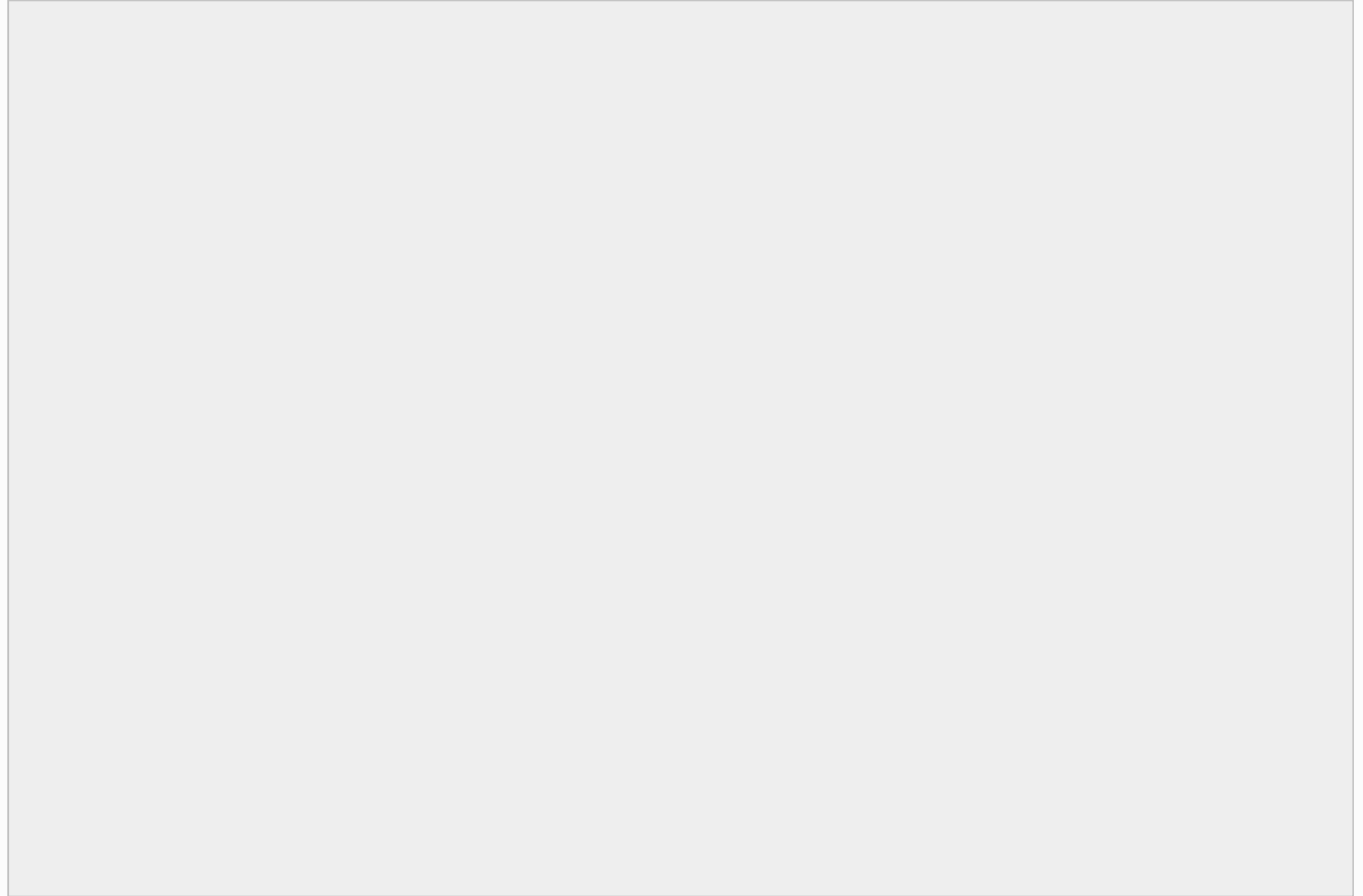
Utred has Nordic swagger, he evolves into a respected warrior lord with an innately chivalrous and respectful nature toward women, even those trying to kill him. Utred is bold and noble, sensual, strategic. He's baptized 3 times during the series, and his best friends Beocca, and Pyrlig, are warrior priests, but his heart remains torn between Saxon and Dane beliefs.

Taking on the challenge

Dreymon recalls, "I was so excited about doing a period show. I did a lot of horseback riding when I was a kid. That whole universe was very appealing to me. I loved every shooting day out on location, it just gives you this sense of the sense of freedom and connection with what the world must have been like back then and it was such a unique chance to experience that to a certain degree; I did have a whole lot more comfort than the people of that era would have had!"

The film and series shot in Hungary where financial incentives, unspoiled swaths of green land, wide vistas and forests, seasoned crews and mostly seasonal weather were a good match. Dreymon became

an Executive Producer on The Last Kingdom and Seven Kings Must Die...he explains what that means and how important that was to him as an actor.



“My contribution was mostly in script development, something I thoroughly enjoyed; I think makes such a difference. Once you get in front of the camera when you're working on a show like this, you become very invested personally, and I think you want it to be the best it can be. When you're part of the production process, you are aware of all the obstacles that you're facing in the development, so whatever conclusion you reach, whatever consensus you get to, for the storyline or for locations, etcetera, you know what you had to battle in order to get there. Things that you might be disappointed about as an actor without knowledge of what's going in production appear very differently when you're part of the production process. You keep that that positive energy and see it through. It just works wonders for your motivation and for the energy you're willing to put into it.”

Netflix came on as co-producer in Season 2 and eventually sole producer from Season 3 forward when BBC dropped out. One wonders who made that call because the show caught fire.

For many, it was the go-to show after Game of Throne's unpopular finale in 2019. Lacking the massive budget for CGI dragons, ice villains, and lavish locations, The Last Kingdom had to rely on...talent. A

slew of actors from Scotland, Iceland, Britain, Sweden, US, Wales, Denmark and beyond joined the cast.

Alexander Dreymon 'nailed' the musical Nordic accent with a dialect coach, and mastered the delivery of the decisive and ironic one-liners that would stick. A physically demanding show, he and the cast stoically withstood the freezing winters and boiling summers.

His handsomely crafted leather and fur costumes were not always seasonally appropriate, but they sure looked great. Dreymon praises the production designer's work.

"The sets were so three-dimensional. Every hut that you see is a hut that you can walk in, and live in. We'd come back every year, and it's all still standing-the set designers did such a great job. As an actor you're really playing in that world!"

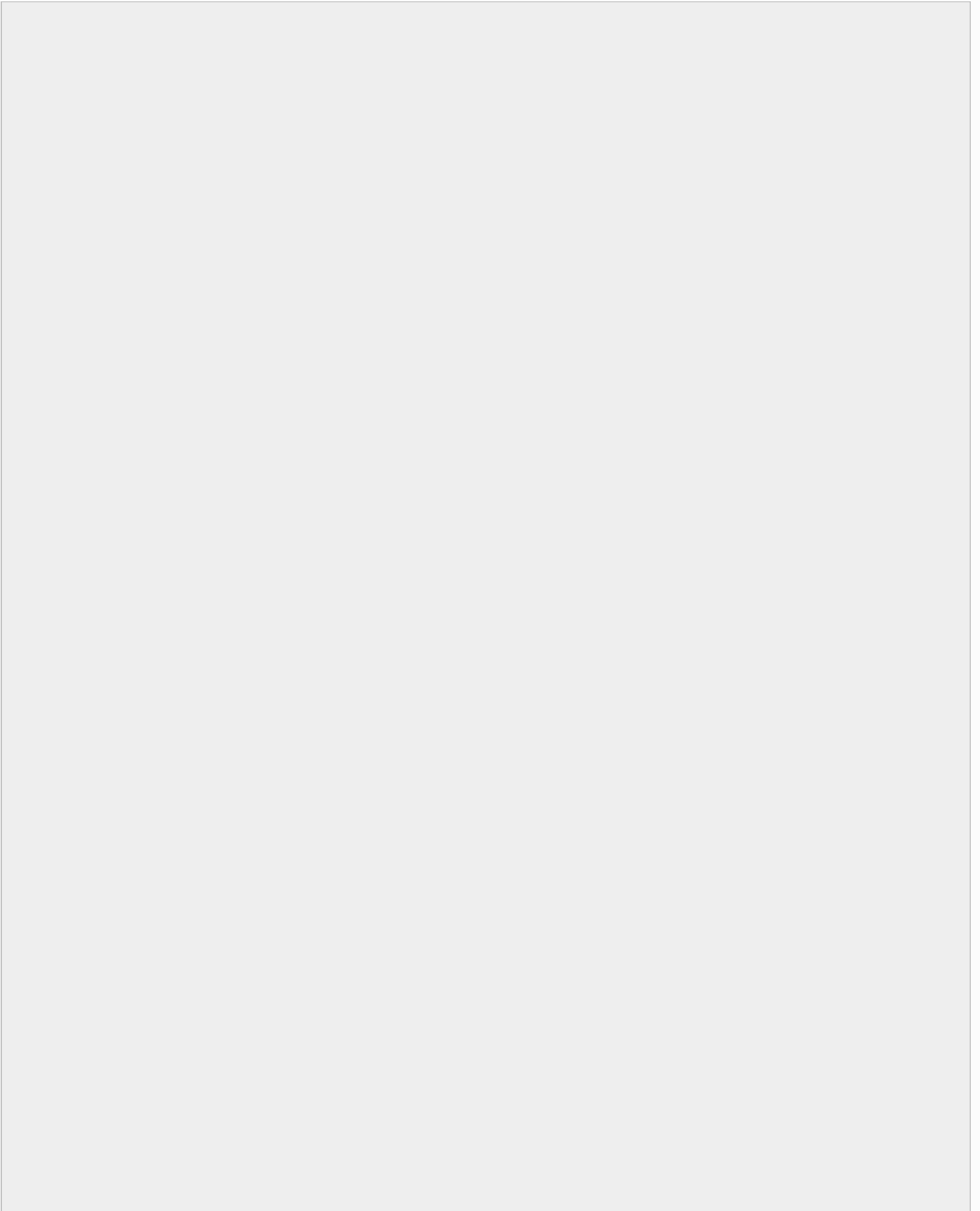
Fans rewatch the series time and again to catch all the historical details, nuances, and the confusing character names. Many Medieval names sound perplexingly alike beginning with 'Aethal' which means 'noble'. It vexed the viewers.

"Even I get confused", admits Dreymon with a chuckle. Utred's mantra, 'Destiny is All,' inspired a million tropes. "I am Utred Son of Utred," never got old, it just got re-tweeted, reposted. And Bebbanburg? When we first see the 'fortress' we're underwhelmed. But it improves over time and ultimately stands. History is the ultimate mirror.

The Last Kingdom's battled dragons, ice villains and viking drama

Determined to reclaim his castle and birthright come what-or who-may stand in his way, Utred gives his oath to reticent Saxon King Alfred, in a show of unity. As a warrior, Utred has no equal. Adept at strategy and warfare with a deep understanding of how both sides think, he becomes a 'kingmaker,' but oh, the disrespect he endures!

Dreymon credits the show's writers with the shock and awe factor. Utred's signature look of disbelief when yet another s---storm hits is a real reaction, explains Dreymon. The Last Kingdom has a way of delivering bad news that just takes your breath away. Dreymon chuckles.



“So yeah, it's like that reading the scripts. You're like, that's gonna happen?! I mean. Stop! The person he loves already got their heads chopped off in front of him. Like where do you go from there? What is next? Utdred's heart just gets broken over and over again. And that's of course a challenge as an actor and to keep to keep those moments fresh and interesting.”

Dreymon directed the complex Episode 2 Season 5. It's loaded with family drama, and plenty of potential obstacles. Shooting In marshes, at night, with fire, in a cellar, and with a child. All limiting factors to trip up anyone but the episode was riveting.

“The choice of the episode was less dictated by its content and more by planning. The amount of prep that you have to put in meant it had to be shot at the beginning of the season for me to be able to get it all done timewise. I'm so grateful that it was that episode because I think my strength lies in getting to the heart of the scene, with the actors. It was so exhilarating to work with all of these actors I trust. What keeps me going is just the passion for my work, you know, in front of the camera, behind the camera. What I love most is teamwork and getting something done, done together.”

Ending a series is always tough. Nothing came easily to Utdred, but he keeps his oath. And at the very end of Season 5, when he finally achieves his life's goal – his castle- his legacy-is set on fire! Then suddenly, it rains! Dousing the flames. Utdred just sinks to his knees. Weeping. It's impossible not to cry watching this.

“That last scene of the series [Season 5, Episode 10] was such a pleasure to shoot. It was actually director John East's idea. He's such a wonderful partner and heartfelt director.” Dreymon was prepared. “I have lived with this character for so long. I could just be in the story and let it happen to me, just take it in and react in real time. Just let the rain wash it all off.” The final scene of Seven Kings Must Die also delivers emotional satisfaction as mortally wounded Utdred rallies, wavering between death and life with loved ones on both sides, and a misty vision of the Feast Hall in Valhalla. Dreymon was born to play rich characters with long swords and rich destinies. A big fan of castles, Dreymon looks forward to visiting and shooting in Spain, perhaps he'll find his 'inner Utdred' in a great historical show set among the magnificent citadels that spark the hills of Iberia.

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