

## 13 Questions to Dwarves from *The Hobbit* / PREVIEW NR. 10 NL

We talked to two out of thirteen Dwarves from *The Hobbit*: Richard Armitage (Thorin) and Graham Mc Tavish (Dwalin). What is it like as treetall fellow to play a shoot up shorty?

**1. Tell us about the Dwarf you play?**

**Richard/Thorin:** Thorin is after revenge. It is up to him to bring his people back to their homeland. He is the leader. If he does not take action quickly, his homeland will be ruined, so there is a heavy burden resting on his shoulders.

**Graham/Dwalin:** Dwalin is a Hells Angel with axes. He is direct, one-dimensional and does not trust others that quickly. When he speaks he does it with a purpose; he doesn't give speeches. An action man so to speak. And losing is no option.

**2. Is Thorin just as big a fighter as Dwalin?**

**Richard:** Thorin walks around with the idea that he does not make it. Interesting for me as actor, because I can also fail if I don't bring his emotions credibly. That doubt gives him strength and humility. He isn't just an angry Dwarf: he has a goal.

**3. And Graham, Dwalin's axes are very special, are they not?**

**Graham:** For sure. In *Wuthering Heights* Emily Brontë describes two dogs: Grasper and Keeper. I decided Dwalin was the type of Dwarf who names his axes, so those names are now engraved into the side of my axes, in Dwarf language!

**4. Did you read *The Hobbit* often, or did you want to give your own twist to your Dwarf?**

**Richard:** I read a lot of Tolkien to get a better understanding of my character. I even listened to Tolkien's voice, because I wanted to know how he viewed Thorin himself.

**Graham:** I also read the book multiple times. I wanted to be immersed in Tolkien's world in order to fathom Dwalin.

**5. Did you have to put on a low pitched voice being a Dwarf?**

**Richard:** I wanted to put a sort of pride into Thorin's voice, so people would listen to him even when he speaks in a soft voice. But he also raises his voice a lot. During war scenes we even had to roar battle cries which would sound like a thunderclap.

**Graham:** We even had to sing. I told Peter: 'You can have me sing in a group, but if I have to sing solo, people will leave the room.'

**6. You being tall guys, what is it like then to play a Dwarf?**

**Richard:** It was essential for Peter to have these Dwarves played by tall actors. Dwarves are short, but undaunted and heavy as a rock. It takes a long time for a Dwarf to get going, like a diesel train, but when he finally gets up pace, you can't stop him.

**Graham:** People step aside when Richard and I are walking by. That was convenient for this role, because Dwarves don't see themselves as shorties. They do want people to step aside for them.

**7. Were you allowed to fight a lot in the movie?**

**Richard:** Absolutely, there are all sorts of fighting scenes in this film. I even had a fighting scene filmed where Thorin fights with six Orcs simultaneously.

**8. Do you get into a lot of arguments with Elves?**

**Richard:** Dwarves and Elves will always quarrel. There's no doubt about that. Elves are delicate, decent creatures. Dwarves are rough. They would transform the beautiful dining hall in Rivendell to a rubble heap in no time.

**9. What if we compare the Dwarves of *The Hobbit* to those of *Snow White*..?**

**Graham:** Haha! If the Hobbit dwarves visited Snow White then her dwarves would leave her little home and they would never return. But at least with the Hobbit dwarves Snow White will be safe!

**10. Graham, as a Scot you are not afraid of drinking. Does Dwalin out-drink you?**

**Graham:** Absolutely. I know Scots who are a lot like Dwalin: direct, one-dimensional yet true till death. With such types you don't want to go into a binge drinking game, as they will always win.

**11. What was it like to collaborate with Peter Jackson?**

**Richard:** I was nervous when I first met him, but he is the type that just after thirty seconds, gives you the feeling that you've known him for a long time. We had the same ideas about Thorin, so that made the collaboration very natural.

**12. What is the hunting battle cry of a Dwarf?**

**Graham:** ASHA RUSHGUHL! Freely translated this means 'Orc-shit'. That cry is what Dwalin uses before he gets into a fight.

**13. Will the success of *Lord of the Rings* be equalled?**

**Richard:** I think so. Peter honoured *The Hobbit* by making it into a trilogy, so he could fit in the entire story. It plays in the same universe, so *The Hobbit* will surely feel like *The Lord of the Rings*. Both trilogies could exist very well next to one another.