

She of the Woods

A new take on Beowulf.

90 mins. East Anglia. Sixth Century.

SHE has seen it all. She has seen her tribal heritage disappear, her identity erased, and her kinfolk die. She has seen clearings hacked into her woods and 'civilized' societies growing and reproducing in them. She, the last of the Seeresses, ignoring the griefs, spends her days in deep alliance with nature. Meanwhile, her only son GRENDEL has been actively protecting the forest from further clearings, by means of terrorising the nearby Heorot Hall and his king HROTHGAR, gaining a reputation as an indestructible pagan monster.

One day BEOWULF arrives at Heorot Hall from faraway lands seeking a chance for glory, and mortally wounds Grendel. Crazed with sorrow, she heads towards the Hall looking for someone to slay. Reassured by her right to avenge, as stipulated by the ancient customary blood feud, She kills the King's most loyal advisor and friend. Heartbroken but satisfied that the feud is settled, She sends Grendel off to the afterlife.

The king, distraught by the news of the attack and the death of his most trusted man, demands further revenge. In his perturbed state, he accuses Beowulf of being responsible. Beowulf must now avenge this new murder and kill She of the Woods, thus ending the pagan threat forever.

She returns to the forest to grieve. Hopelessly lonely and consumed by pain, she looks for solace in ritualistic ceremonies with the company of adders, whom she hopes will be able to kill her. As She is about to give up hope of joining the afterlife, she sees Beowulf and his three soldiers approaching across the lake searching for her.

In disbelief of the blood feud not being respected, her hatred renews. She, who has no name, resolves to avenge all who were silenced before her. The men, in venturing into the depths of the unknown forest, are easy prey. With great joy, She proceeds to hunt the soldiers one by one, tormenting and killing them, until Beowulf remains alone.

Left face-to-face to fight each other, their equal strength leads to mutual respect and understanding – however, Beowulf completes his mission, and he beheads her. As he does so, they both will find themselves in each other's eyes, - She, the uncivilised seeress and he, the defender of modern civilisation, united for a fleeting eternity.

An upset Beowulf wraps She's head into a leather pouch and ties it with string. When he is unwrapping it before the King and the royal court, the head has vanished. Instead, hundreds of seeds fall and scatter everywhere.

She is not defeated. From then on, She will inhabit men's subconscious, always ready to disrupt their need for order.