



The Pale Horseman (The Saxon Chronicles Series #2)

By Bernard Cornwell

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The second installment of Bernard Cornwell's *New York Times* bestselling series chronicling the epic saga of the making of England, "like Game of Thrones, but real" (*The Observer, London*)—the basis for *The Last Kingdom*, the hit television series.

This is the exciting—yet little known—story of the making of England in the 9th and 10th centuries, the years in which King Alfred the Great, his son and grandson defeated the Danish Vikings who had invaded and occupied three of England's four kingdoms.

At the end of *The Last Kingdom*, The Danes had been defeated at Cynuit, but the triumph of the English is not fated to last long. The Danish Vikings quickly invade and occupy three of England's four kingdoms—and all that remains of the once proud country is a small piece of marshland, where Alfred and his family live with a few soldiers and retainers, including Uhtred, the dispossessed English nobleman who was raised by the Danes. Uhtred has always been a Dane at heart, and has always believed that given the chance, he would fight for the men who raised him and taught him the Viking ways. But when Iseult, a powerful sorceress, enters Uhtred's life, he is forced to consider feelings he's never confronted before—and Uhtred discovers, in his moment of greatest peril, a newfound loyalty and love for his native country and ruler.

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The Pale Horseman (The Saxon Chronicles Series #2) By Bernard Cornwell Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Outnumbered Saxon forces continue battling Danish invaders in this rousing sequel to the bestselling *The Last Kingdom*. It's A.D. 877, and the dispossessed Northumbrian noble Uhtred has just routed the Danes in a battle at Cynuit in southern England. Logically, Uhtred should now ally himself with Alfred, whose Wessex kingdom alone has successfully resisted Danish control. But Uhtred sees a better chance of recovering his lost estate if he finds a way to join the Danes, who raised him and whose simple life of "ale, women, sword, and reputation" he finds more congenial than Alfred's Christian piety and military caution. But when the Danes invade Wessex, Uhtred's loyalties are further divided. His Celtic mistress foretells victory for Alfred, but Uhtred can scarcely believe that the bedraggled king, camped in isolated marshes with a handful of supporters, can repel the invaders and unite England. Yet pride grows in Uhtred: "I understood that among the Danes I was as important as my friends, and without friends I was just another landless, masterless warrior. But among the Saxons I was another Saxon, and among the Saxons I did not need another man's generosity." Uhtred demonstrates his newfound patriotism in the book's climactic battle at Edington. Filled with bawdy humor, bloodlust, treachery and valor, this stirring tale will leave readers eager for the next volume in this Alfred the Great series. (Jan.)

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From Booklist

At the conclusion of Cornwell's best-selling *The Last Kingdom* (2005), Uhtred, the dispossessed son of a slain Saxon nobleman raised by Danish warriors, had reluctantly rejoined King Alfred's beleaguered forces in the rapidly dwindling kingdom of Wessex. Although the Danes had already conquered the kingdoms of East Anglia, Northumbria, and Mercia, Alfred, with an able assist from Uhtred, had stalwartly fended off the Viking invasion. Uneasily allied to the cerebral Alfred, the more vigorous Uhtred is plagued by divided loyalties as the Saxons struggle to maintain a toehold against the mighty Viking war machine. Taking refuge in a boggy marshland, the ragtag remnants of the Saxon army desperately attempt to regroup. Two vastly different heroes--Alfred and Uhtred--stand between the Danes and total annihilation of the Saxon culture. Further complicating the matter is the fact that Uhtred faces a moral dilemma when he realizes he must choose between allegiance to the king he has grown to admire and loyalty to Ragnar, his much-loved foster brother. Cornwell, the author of the excellent *Sharpe* series, displays his usual flair for providing action-packed martial history populated by a diverse array of realistically drawn characters. A crackerjack adventure tale from a master of the craft. *Margaret Flanagan*

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Review

"Bernard Cornwell does the best battle scenes of any writer I've ever read, past or present." (George R.R. Martin)

"Superior entertainment that is both engaging and enlightening....Historical adventures as smart and vigorous as Cornwell's are in short supply." (*Washington Post*)

"A big-bellied, bushy-bearded tale of 9th century England. Our hero is Uhtred, a good-hearted lout with a pleasantly sour disposition; he's like a 9th century Han Solo....He endows the book with an unexpectedly complex, thoughtful soul." (*Time*)

“A suavely rendered tale … [brings] turbulent times to vivid life.” (Philadelphia Inquirer)

“Entertaining” (Arizona Republic)

“A crackerjack adventure tale from a master of the craft.” (Booklist)

“Filled with bawdy humor, bloodlust, treachery and valor, this stirring tale will leave readers eager for the next volume .” (Publishers Weekly)

“Great stuff, as always, from the master.” (Kirkus Reviews)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Madelyn McDowell:

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