



Sword Song: The Battle for London (Saxon Tales)

By Bernard Cornwell

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Sword Song: The Battle for London (Saxon Tales) By Bernard Cornwell

The fourth 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.

The year is 885, and England is at peace, divided between the Danish kingdom to the north and the Saxon kingdom of Wessex in the south. Warrior by instinct and Viking by nature, Uhtred, the dispossessed son of a Northumbrian lord, has land, a wife and children—and a duty to King Alfred to hold the frontier on the Thames. But a dead man has risen, and new Vikings have invaded the decayed Roman city of London with dreams of conquering Wessex... with Uhtred's help. Suddenly forced to weigh his oath to the king against the dangerous turning tide of shifting allegiances and deadly power struggles, Uhtred—Alfred's sharpest sword—must now make the choice that will determine England's future.

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Sword Song: The Battle for London (Saxon Tales) By Bernard Cornwell Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Cornwell's fourth entry in the popular Saxon Tales (following *Lords of the North*) is a rousing romp through the celebrated ninth-century reign of Alfred the Great. Uhtred of Bebbanburg, a 28-year-old pagan Saxon lord of war, has pledged to serve Alfred by commanding the defensive frontier forts (*burhs*). Trouble arises when the Norse Viking brothers Sigefrid and Erik Thurgilson capture and occupy London, threatening Alfred's border and his control of the Thames River port. The Christian Alfred directs Uhtred to raise a Wessex army, expel the pagan Thurgilsons and resecure London. Commanding Uhtred is his vain, abusive cousin Ethelred, who is married to Alfred's eldest daughter, Ethelflaed. Plying his swords Serpent-Breath and Wasp-Sting, Uhtred is a stirring, larger-than-life action hero conflicted by ambition, fidelity and thirst for violence. All the major characters are well drawn, and the London battle scenes unfold quickly and vividly. A deft mix of historical details and customs authenticates the saga. And Cornwell drops in a slick twist precipitating the climatic battle to wrest control of London for the Saxons, paving the way for the story to continue. (Jan.)

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Review

“Bernard Cornwell ranks as the current alpha male of testosterone-enriched historical fiction.... As usual, Cornwell offers dramatic battle scenes with big swinging swords. There is also treachery, male bonding, plenty of historical nuggets and a skillful examination of the powerful role played by religion in the Dark Ages. *Sword Song* also has something new: a really terrific and moving love story.... All in all, this satisfying tale leaves you hungry for more of Uhtred’s adventures.” (*USA Today*)

“As expected, the warfare is ferociously bloody, the sacrilege pointedly barbed, and the story expertly paced. Heck, we’d even extol Uhtred’s budding spells of sober reflection about life and love -- if we weren’t certain he’d slice an ear off for saying so.” (*Entertainment Weekly*)

“Cornwell tells Alfred’s story with wit, intelligence and absolute narrative authority.... Like its predecessors, *Sword Song* offers a generous display of Cornwell’s characteristic virtues: larger-than-life characters, direct, uncluttered prose and a precise evocation of the harsh realities of the distant past. As always, the battle scenes are particularly vivid, opening a window on the utter chaos of hand-to-hand combat among heavily armed bands of men. Cornwell remains in full control of this colorful, violent material, and his steadily deepening portrait of Alfred’s nascent England continues to enthrall.” (*Washington Post Book World*)

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“The fourth installment of the acclaimed Saxon Tales series resonates with the same masculine vigor as the first three volumes. Cornwell’s stylistic verve extends to main character Uhtred, a marvelously complex figure.... In typical Conwellian fashion, the battle scenes are magnificent, but the author also deserves points for incorporating a healthy dose of romance and intrigue into the rousing plot. Even readers unfamiliar with

the series will be able to catch on, but devoted fans will devour this volume while eagerly anticipating the next one." (*Publishers Weekly*)

"The direct heir to Patrick O'Brian." (*The Economist*)

From the Back Cover

The year is 885, and England is at peace, divided between the Danish kingdom to the north and the Saxon kingdom of Wessex in the south. Warrior by instinct and Viking by nature, Uhtred, the dispossessed son of a Northumbrian lord, has land, a wife and children—and a duty to King Alfred to hold the frontier on the Thames. But a dead man has risen, and new Vikings have invaded the decayed Roman city of London with dreams of conquering Wessex . . . with Uhtred's help. Suddenly forced to weigh his oath to the king against the dangerous turning tide of shifting allegiances and deadly power struggles, Uhtred—Alfred's sharpest sword—must now make the choice that will determine England's future.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Angel Huitt:

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Jay Blanchard:

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