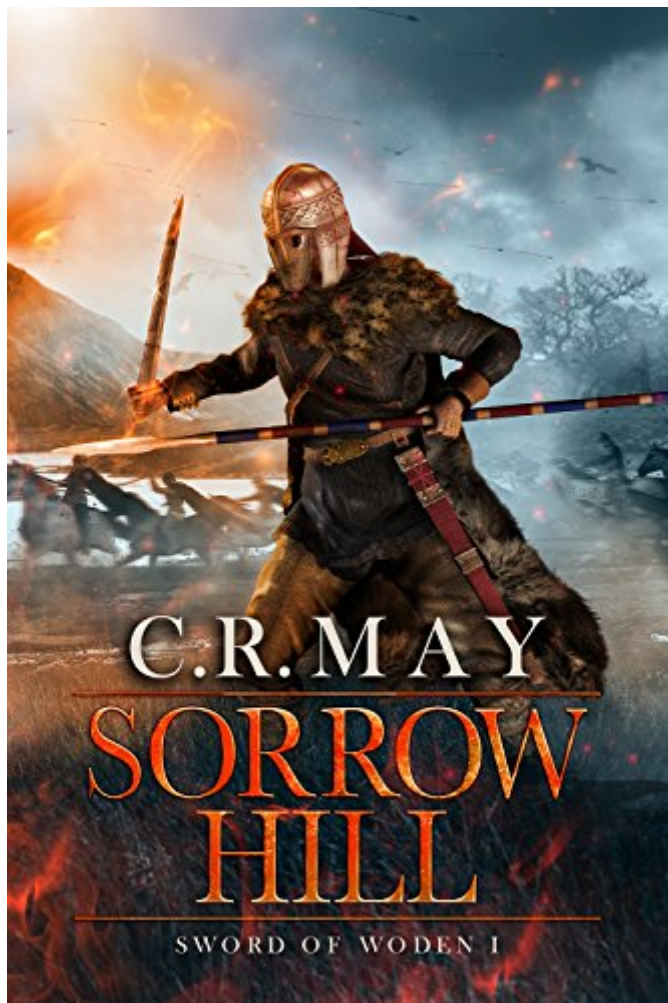


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Sorrow Hill (Sword Of Woden Book 1)



Synopsis

Geatland in the first decades of the 6th Century. Under the benevolent rule of King Hrethel and his sons, the king's grandson is carefully groomed by the family in the skills and duties of the warrior elite. But shadowy forces scheme and plot, and as the boy reaches adulthood a death tears the dynasty apart. Sensing weakness the Swedes harrow the northern provinces, and Beowulf must fight his first desperate battle to save the kingdom. Sword of Woden, Sorrow Hill, is the first in a bestselling series of novels which tell the early life story of a great northern hero. PRAISE FOR THE SWORD OF WODEN SERIES 'Entertaining and building into a really good trilogy. If you like Bernard Cornwell or Simon Scarrow you will love this.' PRAISE FOR THE KING'S BANE SERIES 'This is a book the likes of friends Cornwall, Kristian and Low, would give their eye-teeth to have written...do what you can or must to get hold of this book, you won't regret it.' SPEESH READS PRAISE FOR THE CONQUEROR OF ROME SERIES 'The real test of writing a series is the answer to the question, 'Do I want to read on?' I look forward with pleasurable anticipation to volume two, having enjoyed this far more than most of the commercially published fiction I have read and reviewed in the past two years.' HISTORICAL NOVEL SOCIETY REVIEWS

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Customer Reviews

The Old English poem Beowulf and bits of related legend/history from other sources give a bare framework of the world of the hero Beowulf as a child and youth. We have a few names of kings, and glimpses of a few highlights – a royal fratricide that changed a succession, the somewhat fluid alliances amongst the Scandinavian kingdoms of 1500 years ago, the marriages meant to cement those alliances. Mr May has taken that scant framework and written an exciting and entertaining – “how it might have happened” – novel. He answers some of the questions the old sources leave open: Was the fratricide a tragic accident or something more sinister? Was Unferth a valued part of Hrothgar’s retinue, protecting his lord’s interests, or merely a quarrelsome man? What really happened in that swimming match with Breca? Mr May chooses answers to these questions in a way that makes for a coherent history. For the most part the action is firmly rooted in the natural world. Beowulf does not have superhuman powers, and his world is not teeming with sea monsters and trolls. The divine does make an appearance from time to time; the god Woden is present in the background and there are characters who are able to see further into the future than most men. But this is not a fantasy world where people have daily chats with the gods and random acts of magic are commonplace. It is largely the historical world, with a few characters who are a bit larger than life, where people believed in the old gods and held them in awe. I am a fan of the original Beowulf, and was delighted to see how well the author has done his homework, and written a really engaging novel of the Migration Period.

Sorrow Hill by C R May caught me by surprise in a good way! I have seen Mr. May’s name popping up for some time in various social media ads and in recommendations by friends whose own literary efforts I respect, thus it was no great leap of faith to check out his work. Bottom Line: I am so glad I did! Sorrow Hill is book one of the four book Sword Of Woden series based on one of the most important hero’s of Germanic literature, Beowulf. C R May has done an admirable and very creative job of filling in the poem’s narrative and fleshing out the poem’s characters as well as inventing a few of his own. May employs a pallet of vivid colors as he not only painstakingly and thoroughly develops Beowulf’s world but also in infusing the denizens of his world with abundant substance. Sorrow Hill is ultimately a "coming of age" story and a very good one in which timeworn

platitudes would only do the author and the novel a disservice. Woden...sometimes known as Odin, makes several appearances disguised in human form which only enhances what is very much a historical fiction novel, rather than detracts from the effort. In closing, I highly recommend this book to all fans of well written novels who require a full meal rather than an snack of their reading experience. Further, while NOT a Young Adult novel, I strongly recommend this book be gifted to young adults. I am convinced that the narrative will kindle the flames of imagination and historical appreciation and open a world of wonder which could bear long term appreciation of this genre. I know without doubt that I will look forward to continuing the journey with Mr. May.

The Legend of Beowulf starts again. After risking his life to catch fine baby eagles, Beowulf will have his first meeting with destiny, he will share both food and fire with the Wise One. Without knowing this fact, he will also share a part of his hunt and be blessed by the God itself. Years will pass and Beowulf would go to his uncle Hygelac to be fostered, as befitted for a Earldormen's son. There he will learn the arts of war, both sword and spear and most important, how to lead. As he succeeds, he will become a warrior and will have to test his abilities and wits on the battle that will be known as Sorrow Hill. *****COMMENTARY MAY CONTAIN SPOILERS***** This time, Beowulf's story is revisited by the hand of C.R. May unfolding a interesting and approachable plot on one of the most important legend on Germanic History. We assist to a novel that tells about the coming of age of Beowulf in a plot that has action, intrigue, drama and suspense. The story is very straight forward and similar of best sellers on historical fiction. What really made the difference were the characters and the setting. Those were the page turning facts for me. Beowulf is boy that feels real, more real than the 3182 lines of Old English manuscript. He has the traits of an archetypal hero (plus/minus some other things) , but I was surprised to found his childhood and coming to age so wonderful, vivid and detailed, without being tedious and heavy. I totally enjoyed reading about him. What is different this time? He is brave, bold and powerful as always, but C.R. May made him Smart. Beowulf thinks! It's not about brute force, it's about battle tactics, politics and about society (kind of medieval social networking). On this story, he rests more in the force of his brain than the force of the muscle. He is also taught about remembering names, recruiting loyal hearth-troops, rewarding people and acknowledging the most important thing: an Earldorman or King depends on his people. The cast also is composed by two characters that I liked so much: Father and Son, Hygelac and Heardred. What I like about them is they often provide support for Beowulf in becoming more fitted to some situations. Both are also the equilibrium that Beowulf lacks and they're important in his early life. In the special case of Heardred, we found a honorable sidekick that is balancing

Beowulf's inexperience and eagerness. The rest of the cast performs well and even enemies such as Ohthere and Onela, and rivals as Brecca and Hythcyn are portrayed in a great way. They also behave with honor and grace. Another major point is the setting. We assist to a clash of warring tribes struggling for land, riches and glory meanwhile there some intrigue in the politics. Geatland is well described and comes alive in a time that is not so clear for History yet. Descriptions about sailing, feasting and day-to-day life are told in great and consistent way. The Historical note is also key. It was written in a very familiar approach and I enjoy it as well. The author describes his licenses and some real facts in easy to read account. I personally agree with the liberties that he took. This book has only one flaw, battles. Those are a bit confusing. I got lost during the battle's sequences and had to reread them again to found what happened. I suggested to read them in very calm way and slowly. To be fair, it may be my language barrier but I didn't have that problem in others historical fiction books. Kindle edition is very good and stable on Ipad. On oldest phones, it is also stable but the map shrinks a bit (by the way, I liked the map very much. It has a sense of handmade that i loved). Bottom line: this book is a solid retelling about Beowulf's early life described in a consistent, detailed and engaging way without being tedious. Beowulf is portrayed as a man of both brain and muscle, being the smartest interpretation that I have read so far. I suggest to both fans of the legend and newcomers to read this book, especially if you have seen the animated movie. This book really do justice to this Hero and in my opinion, it is the same level such as Cornwell, Kristian, Donald, Severin, Scarrow and many more. I Was totally gripped and will continue to Wraecca!

If you enjoy the dark ages, and legends of Gods and men, you will love this novel. C R may has a unique take on the legend of Beowulf, weaving fact, legend, and fiction into a most enjoyable tales. This one book led me to all of the the authors other works, and I am reading and enjoying them all. If you like Bernard Cornwall's Uhtred, you wil love this and do give the others a try. I hope to read as many as I can before I go to dwell in Valholl!

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