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Authors Like Bernard Cornwell

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Discovering the Best Authors Like Bernard Cornwell for Historical Fiction Fans

If you have ever been swept away by the thunder of cannon fire in the **Sharpe** series or felt the chill of a Viking longship in **The Last Kingdom**, you know the unique thrill of a Bernard Cornwell novel. His masterful blend of gritty military action, deep historical research, and morally complex protagonists has set a gold standard in historical fiction. But once you have devoured every book in the Saxon Stories, the Sharpe saga, and the Grail Quest, the inevitable question arises: what do you read next?

Fortunately, the genre is rich with talented writers who capture similar magic. Whether you are looking for fierce Viking sagas, Napoleonic-era warfare, or gritty medieval battles, there is a wide world of **authors like Bernard Cornwell**who will satisfy your craving for adventure and authenticity. In this guide, we will explore the top writers who share Cornwell's gift for bringing history to life, and we will highlight specific series and themes to help you find your next favorite read.

What Makes Bernard Cornwell's Writing So Addictive?

Before diving into similar authors, it helps to understand what makes Cornwell's work so compelling. His stories are driven by:

- Flawed, relatable protagonists – characters like Richard Sharpe and Uhtred of Bebbanburg are not perfect heroes; they are pragmatic, sometimes ruthless, but always compelling.
- Meticulous historical detail – Cornwell immerses readers in period-accurate weaponry, tactics, and social norms without weighing down the narrative.
- Fast-paced battle sequences – his combat scenes are visceral, realistic, and strategically clear.
- Strong sense of place – from the muddy fields of Waterloo to the windswept coasts of Northumbria, the settings feel alive.
- Moral ambiguity – neither good nor evil is absolute, and characters often operate in grey areas.

Keeping these elements in mind, here are the authors whose works deliver a similar reading experience.

Conn Iggulden: The Master of Epic Historical Sagas

If you love the grand scope of Cornwell's **Warlord Chronicles**, Conn Iggulden should be at the top of your list. Iggulden is best known for his **Emperor** series (following Julius Caesar) and the **Conqueror**series (about Genghis Khan and his descendants). Like Cornwell, Iggulden excels at blending historical fact with vivid fiction, creating heroes who are both ambitious and vulnerable.

Why Iggulden Is a Perfect Match

His **Wars of the Roses** series is particularly close in style to Cornwell's work. It covers the brutal dynastic

Sharpe in 15th-century England, with a focus on soldiers and kings, while readers of The Saxon Stories will feel at home in the unflinching portrayal of medieval violence and loyalty.

- Best series to start with: Stormbird (Wars of the Roses, Book 1)
- Similarities: Clear, vivid battle scenes, morally grey characters, immersive historical settings.

Simon Scarrow: Roman Warfare with a Cornwell Flair

For those who loved the military camaraderie of the Sharpe novels, Simon Scarrow's **Eagle**series is an absolute must. Set during the Roman Empire, the books follow the adventures of legionaries Macro and Cato. Scarrow's approach to battle is very Cornwell-esque: he explains tactics in an accessible way, focuses on the soldier's experience, and builds deep character relationships over many volumes.

What Sets Scarrow Apart

While Cornwell often writes from the perspective of outsiders or rebels, Scarrow's protagonists are loyal Roman soldiers. Still, the pacing, the moral dilemmas, and the historical richness are strikingly similar. The series has been praised for its authenticity and has a similar number of installments (20+ books) to keep you busy.

- Best series: Under the Eagle (Eagle series, Book 1)
- Similarities: Siege warfare, Roman vs. barbarian conflicts, a mentor-and-pupil dynamic reminiscent of Sharpe and Harper.

Giles Kristian: The Viking Voice You Need

If the **Last Kingdom** left you hungry for more shield walls and dragon ships, Giles Kristian is one of the most talented **authors like Bernard Cornwell** writing Viking-era fiction today. In fact, Kristian has cited Cornwell as a major influence. His **Raven**series follows a young warrior in a Norse warband, and the atmosphere is thick with blood, salt, and pagan mystery.

How Kristian Captures the Spirit

Kristian's prose is lyrical yet brutal, much like Cornwell's. He pays close attention to Norse culture, weaponry, and seafaring, and his characters face the same kinds of impossible choices that define Uhtred's journey. The **Raven** trilogy is a tight, intense story that fans of *The Pagan Lord* will devour in a weekend.

- Best series: Raven: Blood Eye (Raven, Book 1)
- Similarities: Viking shield-wall battles, religious tensions between pagans and Christians, a wandering warrior's quest for identity.

Christian Cameron: For Deep Historical Rigor

Christian Cameron is a former US Navy pilot, a historian, and a reenactor, and it shows. His novels are packed with authentic detail about how people fought, lived, and thought in past eras. Cameron has written multiple series, from the Greek hoplite warfare in the **Marathon** series to the medieval Crusades in the **Chivalry**series. He also writes under the pen name Miles Cameron.

Why Cornwell Fans Will Enjoy Cameron

Like Cornwell, Cameron excels at creating characters who are both products of their time and relatable modern sensibilities. His battle scenes are methodical, realistic, and tremendously exciting. If you enjoyed the tactical depth of **Sharpe's Siege** or the strategic nuance in **Azincourt**, you will find Cameron's work similarly rewarding.

- Best series to start: Killer of Men (Long War series, set in ancient Greece)
- Similarities: Authentic weapon handling, detailed military tactics, epic scope spanning multiple books.

Ben Kane: Blood and Sand in the Ancient World

Ben Kane is a bestselling author of Roman and medieval fiction. His **Forgotten Legion**series and his novels about Hannibal are especially popular among readers who love the epic sweep of Cornwell's historical epics. Kane's novels are action-packed and often focus on soldiers caught in the machinery of war, much like Richard Sharpe.

Key Comparison Points

Kane's ability to make the ancient world feel gritty and immediate is his greatest strength. His battles are bloody and chaotic, and he does not shy away from the cruelty of the times. Many fans of Cornwell have reported that Kane's **Hannibal: Enemy of Rome** is among the best historical war novels they have ever read.

- Best series: The Forgotten Legion (Book 1)
- Similarities: Underdog protagonists, army life, political intrigue, and large-scale battles.

Robert Low: A Grittier Take on the Viking Age

Robert Low's **Oathsworn**series offers a darker, more foul-mouthed version of the Viking world. While Cornwell's Uhtred has a certain charm, Low's protagonist Orm Ruriksson is a grizzled mercenary with a very cynical view of the world. If you appreciate the raw, unsentimental side of Cornwell's writing, Low will appeal to you.

What to Expect

The language is rougher, the morality murkier, and the pace relentless. Low's deep research into Norse culture and his visceral descriptions of winter campaigns and sea battles make him a standout among **authors like Bernard Cornwell**. The series is complete at seven books, perfect for a binge read.

- Best series: The Whale Road (Oathsworn, Book 1)
- Similarities: Shield-wall combat, treasure hunts, a band of brothers, and a protagonist with a dark past.

Other Notable Mentions

The world of historical military fiction is vast, and several other writers deserve a place on your reading list. Here are additional authors who share Cornwell's strengths:

- Bernard Cornwell himself – of course, if you have missed any of his standalone novels like Azincourt or The Fort, they are excellent companions to his series.
- David Gilman – his Master of War series follows an English archer in the Hundred Years' War, a perfect match for fans of Azincourt and Harlequin.
- Angus Donald – wrote a gritty, realistic Robin Hood series (Outlaw) that has a Cornwell-like feel for medieval life and violence.
- Jack Whyte – his Camulod Chronicles offer a historically grounded take on the Arthurian legend, similar in spirit to The Warlord Chronicles.
- Michael Arnold – the Civil War Chronicles are set in the English Civil War, a less common period but delivered with Cornwell's trademark action and historical accuracy.

How to Choose Your Next Series

With so many excellent **authors like Bernard Cornwell**, you might feel overwhelmed. Here is a quick guide based on your favorite Cornwell series:

- If you love the Sharpe series: Start with Simon Scarrow's Eagle books or David Gilman's Master of War.
- If you love The Last Kingdom (Saxon Stories): Try Giles Kristian's Raven series or Robert Low's

Oathsworn.

- If you love The Warlord Chronicles: Conn Iggulden’s Wars of the Roses or Jack Whyte’s Camulod Chronicles are excellent choices.
- If you love the Grail Quest series: Christian Cameron’s Chivalry series offers similar medieval archery and French campaigns.

Conclusion: The Journey Continues

Bernard Cornwell has given us unforgettable characters, breathtaking battles, and immersive worlds. But the genre is alive with talented writers who carry that torch forward. Whether you plunge into the Roman legions with Simon Scarrow, sail with Giles Kristian’s Vikings

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