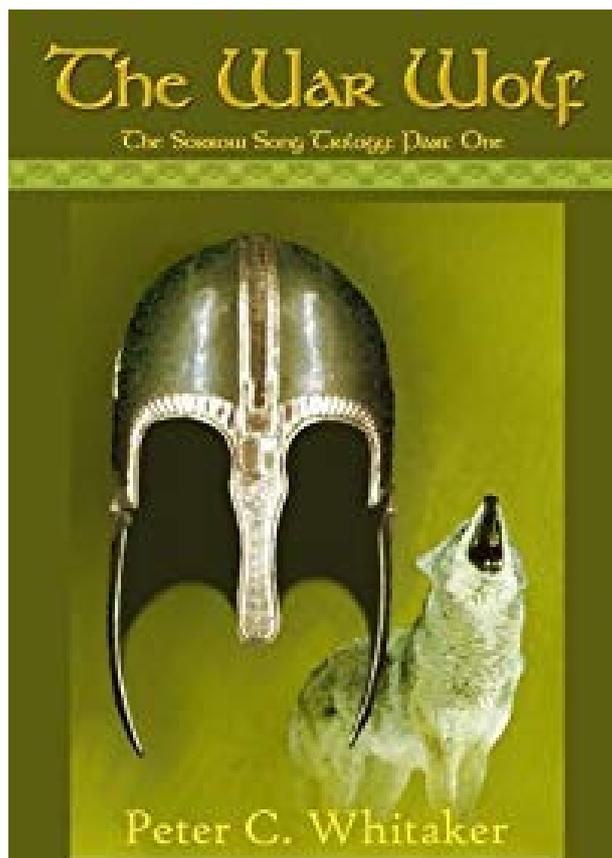


The War Wolf (The Sorrow Song Trilogy)



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The War Wolf recounts the opening battle of 1066 as King Hardrada of Norway out manoeuvres King Harold of England by landing the largest Viking army ever to set foot in the north of the kingdom. His objective is to capture York, the capital of Northumbria, and in this he is aided by Tostig Godwinson, the traitorous brother of the King of England. Unaware of the coming danger Coenred the Huscarl, an elite warrior of the Saxon army, considers retiring to his estate. His relationship with his young lords, Edwin and Morcar, has become strained and although in the prime of life he tires of following the way of the sword. In York he meets the beautiful young widow Mildryth who comes to him seeking protection, she has a presentiment that the shadow of her husband's murderer Tostig Godwinson will fall upon her again.

As Coenred looks to choose the life of a theign on his farm in Holderness news comes of a massive Viking fleet sailing up the River Humber, bound for York. Honour will not allow Coenred to abandon his fellow huscarls, his lords, or the people of York to the threat of conquest by their ancient enemy. King Harold remains in the south, unaware of the danger and with one eye on the movement of the Normans who wait for a clear day to sail their own invasion force to England. It falls to Coenred as servant to Eorl Edwin and his brother Eorl Morcar, to meet the War Wolf in combat. For embittered Tostig Godwinson a quest for revenge on those who toppled him from his once high station as the Eorl of Northumbria has brought him into an unholy alliance with the King of Norway. He seeks the blood of both Eorl Edwin and Eorl Morcar who inflicted an ignominious defeat upon him a few months before. Even more so he plans the destruction of his

elder brother who recommended his banishment to old King Edward. Where once there was brotherly love there is now only hate of the most vindictive kind. England is in a precarious state but so is Norway. A long and fruit war against Denmark has left King Hardrada with an empty treasury and stained reputation. The greatest Viking of his day Hardrada sails to England to capture a crown that sits uneasily upon the head of Harold Godwinson, but he has had to make alliances to rebuild his army, alliances with the Jarls of Orkney, and even with the old enemy, the Saxons themselves. Amidst the confusion stalk the likes of Wulfhere, thief and murderer with one eye always open for an opportunity to enrich himself at the cost of another.

He has spied out Mildryth and believes her to be due a small fortune in compensation for the death of her husband at the hands of the king's brother. When the men are away at battle women such as her are vulnerable to men such as he. When King Harold hears the news of the Viking invasion in the north he chooses not to move from London but rather trust to his cousins Edwin and Morcar to close the gates of York and hold the city against the King of Norway. The young eorls, however, continue their father's jealousy of the House of Wessex and seek glory to match the Godwinsons. They do not believe that they can achieve that by hiding behind the Roman walls of York, instead they plan to meet the Vikings at Fulford Gate and win a match victory over them. Despite his high standing Coenred cannot change the course of the young eorls and so he must stand in the shield-wall with his brother warriors at the Battle of Fulford Gate and fight for his life and the lives of all those depending upon him, against a man who has never lost a battle; against the War Wolf himself!