WESTCHESTER
COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

(Rising) Advanced English 10 Summer Reading Assignment
Summer 2026

This summer, you should read ***The Last Kingdom*** **(linked here) by Bernard Cornwell**. There is an adaptation on Netflix; however, note that the adaptation is based on a series of 12 novels, not just the first book. The series is not a shortcut.

Set in Northumbria, in the years A.D. 866-867, the novel begins, "My name is Uthred. I am the son of Uthred, who was the son of Uthred and his father was also called Uthred" (Cornwell 4). From the start, we learn that this is the story of a man with an important family lineage. Although a fictional story, many of the places and names are real, such as Wessex and King Alfred. There are Anglo Saxons and Vikings, brutal battles, and touching relationships. You may find yourself doing research about the historical background, and the novel will certainly give you a great frame of reference before we begin our study of *Beowulf* later in the fall.

Once you have finished the novel, write a 500-600 word (typed, MLA format, double-spaced) response in which you discuss ONE of the values/beliefs of the Danes OR the Saxons that you noticed ***and explain how Cornwell reveals that throughout the novel***. You should include textual examples from multiple sections of the novel, not just the first half, and take care to introduce quoted material (see link here). All passages should be judiciously quoted and cited according to MLA guidelines. (I need to see your ideas, not line after line of quoted material; there should not be block quotations.)

As a reminder, the **Westchester Honor Code applies to this assignment. You should not consult others or Google, and all work should be your own interpretation and understanding (no use of Generative AI).** Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Mrs. Albert via email and she will send your questions to Mr. Blackburn.