

Artistic Reflections

As an author, I've had the opportunity to meet authors, editors, cover artists and even a publisher or two. They all have something important to offer if only we take the time to listen.

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Tuesday, February 25, 2014

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: MARY ANN BERNAL



Brief Bio

Mary Ann Bernal, author of *The Briton* and the *Dane* novels, is an avid history buff whose area of interest focuses on Ninth Century Anglo-Saxon Britain during the Viking Age. While pursuing a degree in business administration, she managed to fit creative writing classes and workshops into her busy schedule to learn the craft, but it would take decades before her "Erik the Viking" novel was ultimately published.

Mary Ann is also a passionate supporter of the United States military, having been involved with letter writing campaigns and other support programs since Operation Desert Storm. She has appeared on *The Morning Blend* television show hosted by KMTV, the CBS television affiliate in Omaha, and was interviewed by the *Omaha World-Herald* for her volunteer work. She has also been a featured author on *Triangle Variety Radio*, *The Phil Naessens Show*, and *The Writers Showcase*, and has been interviewed extensively by American and European bloggers. Mary Ann is a New York "expat," and currently resides in Omaha, Nebraska.

[The Briton and the Dane: Timeline - excerpt](#)

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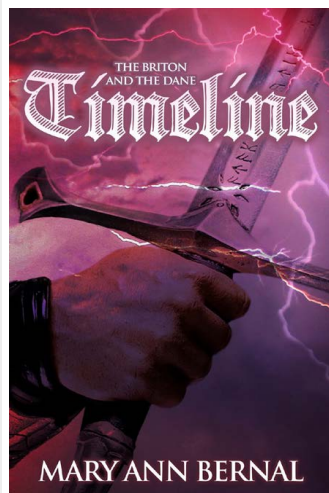
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The lobby was empty when she walked into the quaint building, a replica of an Anglo-Saxon lodging, which also happened to be her favorite inn.

“Dr. Franger, it is so good to have you back,” Edna Harris said. “Will you be having dinner with us this evening?”

“I would prefer to eat in my room if I may. I seem to be unusually tired.”

“That is understandable, the tiredness,” Edna replied as she beckoned the night porter to escort Gwyneth to her quarters.

As soon as Gwyneth was alone, she pulled the drapes back and stepped onto the patio, her eyes transfixed upon the solitary Keep that had been miraculously preserved. The radiant red and orange hues of twilight, coupled with the distant sound of waves breaking against the rocky shore, added to the mystique of the crumbling walls. She suppressed the urge to climb the tower before darkness set in. She wanted to glance upon the beach, just as Lord Erik would have done in another lifetime.

Fortunately, a gentle tapping on the door kept her from acting impulsively. She smiled at the night porter as he pushed the cart inside the room.

“Ham, peas, pudding, honeyed cakes, and a cup of mead, Dr. Franger.”

“Tell Mrs. Harris I am delighted with her choice,” Gwyneth replied as he left.

Gwyneth sipped the intoxicating brew, sitting on the settee as a soft sea breeze caressed her face. She closed her eyes, dreaming of a past she had never shared with the one man who held her heart.

“I will discover the truth,” she thought.

“I know you will,” whispered the wind.

5 Questions for the author



What do you write and why do you write it?

My area of interest focuses on Anglo-Saxon Britain during the reign of Alfred the Great when the formidable Vikings terrorized all of Christendom. I am fascinated with the time period, for which there is scant documentation, leading to speculation and “filling in the dots” as to what actually happened in the late Ninth Century. The Briton and the Dane novels weaves controversial themes throughout the series, such as religious beliefs, violence, treachery and betrayal.

What do you hope to accomplish with your writing?

One of the themes running through The Briton and the Dane series is the plight of the warrior and his family. My stories shed light on the effect a warrior's "career" has on the family, and the sacrifices made by loved ones. My subtle inferences are seen in today's society, with our deployed men and women serving their county and preserving our freedom. Thank a service person and/or veteran for their service. Freedom is not free.

There are religious undertones in this series. Why did you take on such a controversial topic?

One of the terms of the peace treaty, after King Alfred defeated the Danish King Guthrum, was that the pagan Norseman was to be baptized into the Christian faith. When King Guthrum returned to his lands in East Anglia, his subjects were forced to accept Christianity, upon pain of death. I was curious as to how these people felt about being forced to deny the gods of their ancestors. Horrific stories of torture and death are very persuasive, just as they are today. The point being, would you give your life for your religious beliefs? Just how strong is your faith? Not an easy question. And, what of the guilt, if you choose to deny God?

Which one of your books from the Briton and the Dane series would you like to see as a film adaption and who would you have play the main characters?

The Complete Trilogy is an epic adventure - a great period mini-series that can hold its own against such epics as Pillars of the Earth, Camelot, Game of Thrones, et cetera. I would have an all-star cast that would need to work for union scale lest the cost to produce such an epic becomes prohibitive. I have cast every character in the story, but since space is limited... Chris Egan as Erik, Richard Armitage as Cerdic, Jeremy Irons as Richard, James Franco as David and Clive Owen as Stephen. And they all know how to wield a sword!

What prompted you to write The Briton and the Dane: Timeline?

When I first set pen to paper when writing The Briton and the Dane, the storyline was about Gwyneth and Erik's relationship, and the problems they faced in a land ravaged by war and conquest. Gwyneth was a Christian Saxon and Erik was a pagan Danish Viking. Would their love survive the obstacles they had to face?

However, as the story evolved, the ancillary characters started demanding more representation, wishing to have to have additional "screen time." Suddenly, there wasn't enough room to satisfy everyone in one novel, which gave birth to the trilogy.

To me, Gwyneth and Erik shared the stage with too many players, and I do believe they felt cheated. I was toying with the idea of a standalone novel dedicated to Gwyneth and Erik, but what if fate had kept them apart, centuries apart? How would a 21st century Gwyneth fare in 11th century England?

Science Fiction and Anglo-Saxon England, two of my favorite topics in one novel. It cannot get any better than this.

Links

Webpage

<http://www.maryannbernal.com>

Twitter

<http://twitter.com/#!/BritonandDane>

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<http://maryannbernal.blogspot.com/>

New Release - The Briton and the Dane: Timeline

Amazon US

http://www.amazon.com/The-Briton-Dane-Mary-Bernal/dp/1494864622/ref=tmm_pap_title_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1393369128&sr=8-1

Amazon UK

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Briton-Dane-Mary-Ann-Bernal-ebook/dp/B00I4WFOUW/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1393369096&sr=8-1&keywords=The+briton+and+the+dane+timeline

youtube trailer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijK8NgFL4Ks>

Posted by D, John at 5:49 PM



1 comment:



Mary Ann Bernal March 7, 2014 at 6:18 AM

Thanks for having me, John. Love talking about my work.

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