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## The Story Behind The Briton and the Dane Trilogy

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I fell in love with medieval England after reading Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe" in my sophomore year of high school, but my interests soon turned towards the Dark Ages when the formidable Vikings harassed the civilized world once Hollywood released such blockbusters as "The Vikings," "The Longships," and "Erik the Viking." Add to the mix "Alfred the Great," "Prince Valiant," and "King Arthur," and an incurable romantic anglophile was born.

As time went on Hollywood changed its venue of period movies, but I found solace with the many British programs being aired on our local PBS station. With the advent of BBC America and History International, I was able to find great documentaries such as "The Dark Ages," "Life in Anglo-Saxon Times," "Dark Age England," and "Viking Exploration," to name but a few.

During this time, Erik the Viking was hovering in the cobwebs of my creative mind, waiting to escape oblivion, waiting to tell his story, waiting and waiting and waiting, but it was not until 2008 that I was able to find the time to devote to fulfilling my lifelong dream of writing my Erik the Viking novel.

Why did I focus on Alfred the Great and King Guthrum? I chose these two formidable characters because they are fascinating. This was a time of conflict and change, when Christianity was replacing the pagan religion, and the feared Vikings no longer plundered the fertile country of Britannia but remained and settled the land.

When King Alfred defeated King Guthrum in 878, one of the terms for peace was the Christian baptism of the Danish King. I wondered how this heathen King might have felt about denying the gods of his ancestors as he willingly accepted the Roman Christ God, and also wondered how willing his subjects had been to submit to the rules of the new religion.

In addition to the religious conflict, there were also petty Kings who coveted the throne, not only King Alfred's crown, but King Guthrum's as well. Throw into the mix, illegitimate offspring and you have all the makings for a great story.

While Erik started out as my main character, the supporting characters quickly sought to usurp the protagonist role. I had often heard the phrase, "but then my characters took over," and suddenly discovered that the statement is very true. Erik had to share the limelight with the many prominent figures, and these characters refused to play a minor role in an ongoing saga.

The same holds true for our antagonist; there are many opponents as the story unravels, each with their own agenda, but each seeking power and wealth.

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I delve into the minds of the characters as they deal with conflicts that are quite common today: father/son relationships and acknowledgement of paternity, religious confrontation, and warfare. The people who lived in the 9th century were flesh and blood as we are flesh and blood. They faced the same problems, made similar choices, and perhaps regretted their decisions.

I also wanted to reach out to the families of our modern day warriors, and to remind everyone that the only thing that has changed in warfare over time has been its weaponry. What has not changed is the anxiety as one awaits the fate of their loved one; waiting is difficult no matter which century you live in.


Since "The Briton and the Dane: Legacy" is the third and final installment of the trilogy, I should be willing to say goodbye...the key word here is should...but there are many stories still to tell, and many characters to meet, and enough passion, intrigue, treachery and betrayal to enthrall an audience...so fear not my faithful fans, the series will continue.

"The Briton and the Dane" trilogy has been a joy to write, and I trust a joy to read. Enjoy the adventure, it only gets better.

**Mary Ann Bernal** is not only an official member of LitU, but an author, a blogger, and one of the absolute nicest human beings walking the face of the Earth. You can find her personal website [HERE](#).

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