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The books are where the Juice is.

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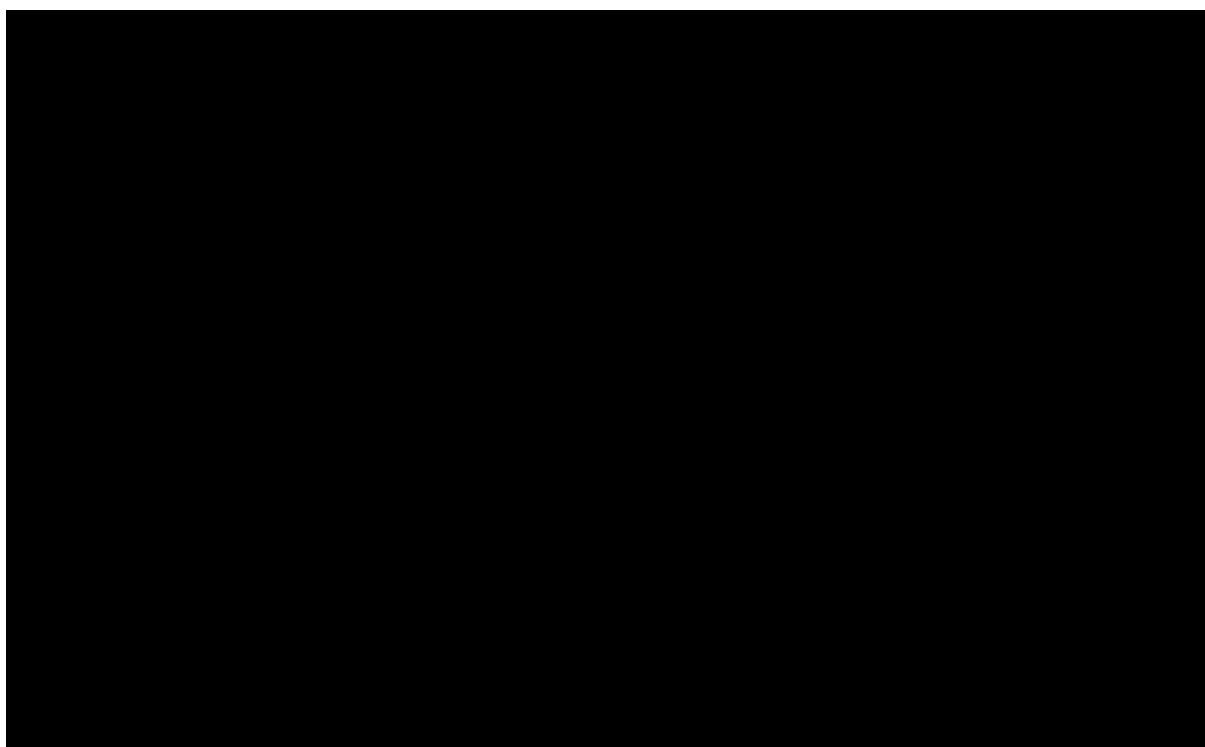
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## Meet Special Guest Author: Mary Ann Bernal with “The Briton and the Dane: Concordia”

Posted on [18 August 2013](#) by [Bill Jones, Jr.](#) — [Leave a comment](#) ↓

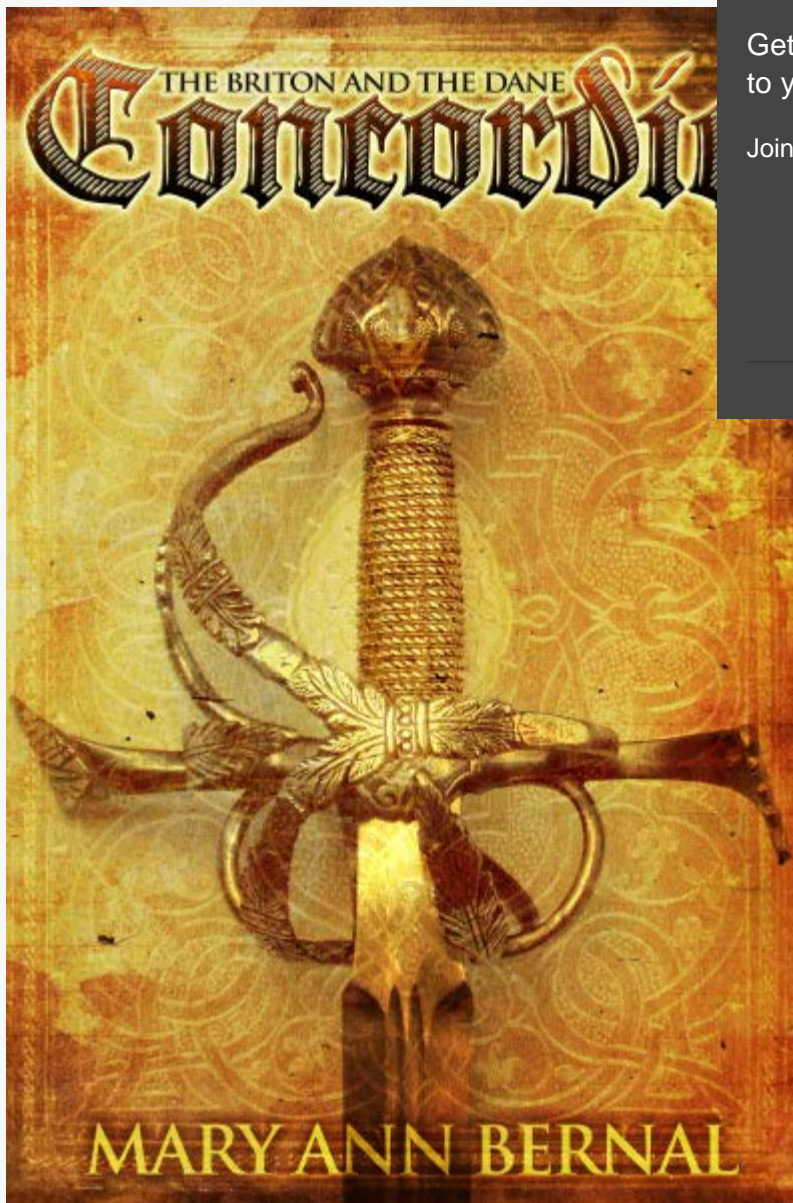
This week I am restarting a series I had a couple of years ago, when I began featuring Indie authors. We start off the series with novelist and friend, Mary Ann Bernal. Instead of an interview, however, we thought the best way to introduce you to Mary Ann is through her work.

With that in mind, let's whet your appetite a bit with the trailer for her latest work, *The Briton and the Dane: Concordia*.



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What? Need more? Hmm, tough crowd. Okay, well how about an excerpt? Here's Chapter Three for your enjoyment.

## The Briton and the Dane: Concordia

### Chapter Three

The court school was a bustle of activity as teachers prepared the day's lesson. The three-story building contained classrooms on the first two floors, but the prized library occupied the entire third level where learned

scribes copied selected passages from literary works for use during class. Students who sought to master a difficult subject would be tutored privately before lessons began while the remaining aspiring scholars shared the morning meal in the nearby kitchens.

Concordia's mind was elsewhere as she helped herself to a bowl of porridge before sitting at the end of the long table. She smiled at the young men when they acknowledged her presence, but her thoughts were chaotic as she satisfied her hunger. She stared through the open window as translucent sunbeams caressed the dew-soaked grass, and she was genuinely startled when Brother Frederic joined her. She paid no heed to the curious stares of her fellow students while she quietly conversed with her favorite teacher.

"We need privacy," Brother Frederic whispered, annoyed by the men's probing glances. "Come with me."

Concordia felt the color rising as her face turned crimson when she and Brother Frederic suddenly arose from the table and left the room. She could hear the whispers when she stepped into the dusty courtyard, but she stifled her laughter, knowing that this unprecedented event only added to her mystique. Since she was the only young woman attending the court school at this time, she maintained a brotherly-type friendship with the young men, taking care not to encourage their unsolicited advances.

"I fear I have aroused their curiosity, but I had little choice," Brother Frederic apologized.

"Do not worry, they will soon forget our meeting...but I am pleased you sought me before setting out for Exeter...and if I may be so bold...I seek a favor...if you are willing."

"If it is within my power, you know well my answer."

"I have written my Uncle Sidonius whose villa is not far from the abbey," Concordia said softly as she retrieved a sealed parchment from her pouch. "If you would personally deliver this, then I need not trouble the king's messenger."

"Is that all?" Brother Frederic grinned conspiratorially. "Dare I venture a guess?"

"Do not tease me so! But I do confess you know me well."

"Ah, you would have your uncle champion your cause. Am I right?"

Concordia nodded excitedly.

"Perhaps I might also be of assistance, if the Bishop grants my request."

"I do not understand. Of what do you speak?"

"It has always been my desire to visit the Holy Land. If I am permitted this pilgrimage, then we might travel together...I would see you safely delivered to Athens before proceeding onto Jerusalem."

"The Greek students will return to their homeland soon...we could travel on their ship!"

"We both must have permission, my child," Brother Frederic reminded her. "I will await your uncle's reply before returning...but without your father's consent..."

"Leave my father to me," Concordia interrupted as she embraced the Benedictine monk warmly. "Godspeed."

Concordia waited in the early morning heat until Brother Frederic was lost to her view before returning to the court school. She did not want to be instructed this day, she wanted to get a message to her father and beg the queen's help, she wanted to make preparations for her journey, and she needed to find Emidus who was noticeably absent when the study of mathematics began.

The morning seemed endless as Concordia sat through her assigned classes, her waning interest quite noticeable by the time the bells called the faithful to *Sext*. She grabbed her books, running out the door and into the busy street before the final rhythmic chime. She hurried towards Emidus' quarters while praying silently that he had not taken to his bed.

"Emidus!" Concordia screamed as she pushed open the door to his chambers and ran into the empty room.

"My lady?" A serving woman asked.

"Have you seen my brother?"

"He was with Prince Edward at the morning meal, but he has yet to return to his quarters. Is something wrong?"

"It is nothing...I had forgotten about his meeting...I did not mean to disturb you."

The serving woman smiled, returning to her chores while Concordia went back to her nearby chambers. She opened the door slowly so as not to startle any servants that might be cleaning her quarters, and breathed a sigh of relief when she found the rooms empty. She poured herself a cup of watered-down wine and sipped her drink slowly as she walked towards the window. She glanced at the Keep, searching for the familiar figure that would never return as she grasped the delicate beads of her treasured necklace between her fingers. She watched the soldiers patrolling the wall-walk and smiled silently when she noticed the embarrassed look of a young maiden when the boy she apparently fancied stole a kiss.

"I wonder if Thayer is promised," Concordia mumbled to herself as the enamored couple disappeared from her view, yet sighing wistfully when she heard the knock on the door.

"Enter!"

Emidus opened the door slowly, glancing about the room before entering. He noticed his sister's pensive look while helping himself to some wine. He drained the cup in one swallow, filled it again and emptied it quickly. He sat the goblet down and joined his sister at the window, remaining silent as he gazed upon her face, and waited patiently for her to speak.

"You were sorely missed this morning...I thought you had taken ill."

"I did not mean to upset you...the hour was late when I spoke with Prince Edward...but you are right, I should have told you."

"Why were you summoned?"

"You are speaking to Prince Edward's personal advisor," Emidus beamed.

"Father will be proud as I am proud!" Concordia said excitedly as she embraced her brother. "And Uncle Sidonius...we must send word!"

"So we shall, but I fear your travel plans have been thwarted."

"How so?"

"I cannot accompany you on your journey."

"Not to worry, dear brother...I have since learned that Brother Frederic is planning a pilgrimage to the Holy Land...he will travel with me and see to my safe deliverance! And he will visit with Uncle Sidonius who must surely sanction my journey."

"Have you sent word to father?"

"No, but the letter is written. If you write of your appointment, then the messages can be sent together, and I do believe father's messenger has yet to return to Wareham."

"I will see to it," Emidus grinned. "Ah, I almost forgot...King Alfred has received word from Brantson...he is personally escorting two captured Norsemen to Winchester...he should arrive within a fortnight. Would you be pleased to see him?"

"How could you ask such a question? Brantson is my dearest friend...and I must confess that I have written him, seeking his counsel when he next meets with the king."

"Intriguing as always, dear sister...would you speak of your lost love or convince him to champion your cause?"

"You are most wicked!" Concordia laughed. "I would seek his protection on the voyage, if the king agrees to my request."

"Watch your words or all will be lost."

"I do not understand."

"Concordia, I have seen how Brantson looks at you...I do believe you hold his heart, but..."

"You are mistaken...we do have a special bond...that is true...but we are as brother and sister, that is all."



"Nevertheless, tread carefully. Brantson is also like a brother and I would not have you encourage his advances if your heart lies elsewhere."

"Emidus! You do me a grave injustice. I would take the veil rather than cause Brantson pain...I cannot bear the thought!"

"Would you consider becoming his wife? Brantson is a suitable match and father would be very pleased."

"Now look what you have done! How can I face Brantson knowing that he pines for me...you have ruined everything!"

"You are behaving like a coddled child!" Emidus told her firmly. "Surely you know that you cannot remain a maid forever. Why not be wed to a man who truly loves you? You already love him as a friend...the marriage could work."

"Leave me...I beg you," Concordia said through misty eyes. "I have much to think about."

"I am sorry you are troubled, but you must know the truth little sister...and you must know that I cannot protect you forever."



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.

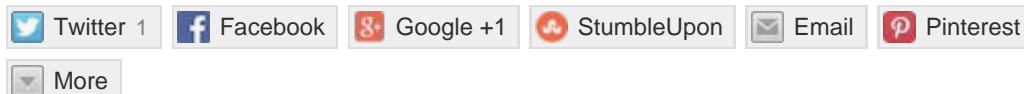
Mary Ann is also a passionate supporter of the United States military, having been involved with letter writing campaigns and other support programs since Operation Desert Storm. She has appeared on The Morning Blend television show hosted by KMTV, the CBS television affiliate in Omaha, and was interviewed 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.

You can purchase her latest work here: [Amazon US](#) or [Amazon UK](#).

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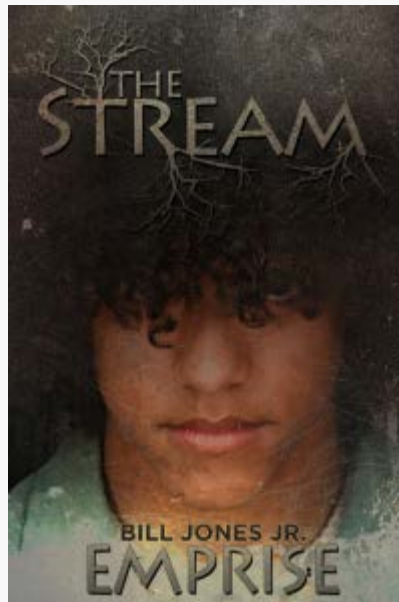
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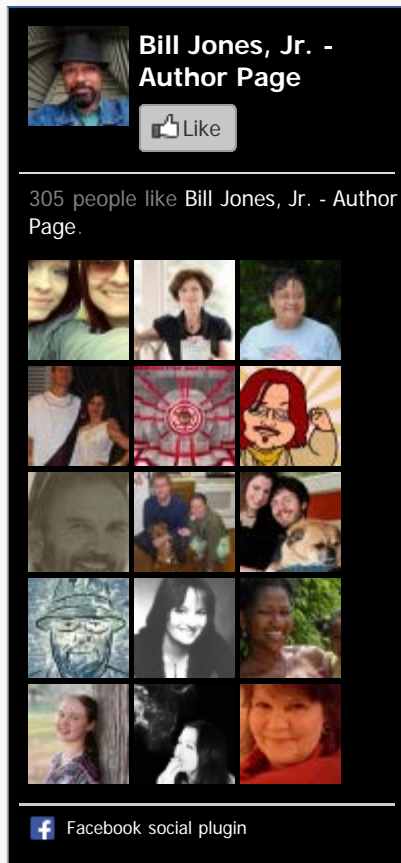
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