

SATURDAY, 22 JUNE 2019

#BookReview — The Briton and the Dane: Legacy by Mary Ann Bernal #HistoricalFiction
@BritonandDane



The Briton and the Dane: Legacy
(The Briton and the Dane #3)
By Mary Ann Bernal



Whispered by the wise and the learned. Talked of in hushed tones round luminous firesides. Engraved by awestruck scribes in the scriptoria of the Chronicles. Against all the odds, great King Alfred defeated a vastly superior Danish army outside Chippenham.

This victory, the sages prophesied, would guarantee peace throughout the land. Or so they thought.

Two years later, Rigr the Bastard, vengeful and seeking to claim his birthright, was defeated in the wilds of East Anglia. His blood smeared berserker warriors vanquished; no quarter asked for - no quarter given.

Now, a further two years later, the Vikings return. Noble Prince Sven instigates a seaborne invasion, fuelled partly by blind rage when he discovers that his brother, Prince Erik, has sworn fealty to the Anglo-Saxon king.

His own brother: A traitor and a fool.

Erik's love, Lady Gwyneth, attempts to stop the invasion before it starts by uniting the two estranged brothers, but her scheming only succeeds in making matters worse. Indeed, her interference guarantees the death of thousands of warriors in the freezing, tumultuous North Sea.

So when the horns of Sven's monumental fleet of warships are heard off the fogbound coast of Britannia, King Alfred – outnumbered, outshipped and weary of the fray - must rouse his jaded Saxon warriors and lead them to sea, to repel his most formidable enemy yet.

For a host motivated by the spilled blood of the fallen, the spirit of black vengeance, and the delights of a warrior's reward in Valhalla, is the most fearsome opponent of all.

Alfred. Sven. Erik. Gwyneth. Amidst the ferrous reverberation of a battle royale - one or all must die, and the fate of a nation hangs in the balance, one final time.



“Why must she be forced to choose between a husband and her son...?”

God against Gods. King against King. Brother against Brother.

Years of fighting. Years of bloodshed. How many more husbands, sons, and lovers must die? However, the men from the North keep on coming to the shores of Briton. Their numbers are as seemingly endless as the tide. There is no peace for Alfred of Wessex, no matter how badly he may long for it.

One more battle and perhaps the future of a nation may be decided. Alfred and his men are formidable warriors — have they not already proven that? However, this time, the battle will not be on dry land. This time Alfred must meet the invaders where they are most formidable — amongst the waves.

Only time will tell if Alfred will be victorious. May God keep them safe and have mercy on their souls.

Filled with intrigue, betrayal, hate and love, *The Briton and the Dane: Legacy* by Mary Ann Bernal is as breathtakingly poetic, as it is sweepingly elegant in its brilliance. This story left me so breathless with anticipation that I could not turn the pages fast enough. I was utterly enthralled from start to finish.

I simply adored this book. So much happens that at times it left my head spinning! There is a cast of very colourful and memorable characters. Some of these characters I have come to adore over the course of the series, others not so much! One thing that can never be said is that Bernal's characters are dull. They are so unpredictable, and many times during the course of this novel, I found myself shaking my head and whispering, "What are you doing? No. Don't do that! Please... No, you did it!" The impulsiveness of the characters and the fact that their hearts and not their heads rule many, made their stories not only believable but wonderfully human in the telling.

Like before, with the first two books in this fabulous series, Bernal has captured the very essence of the era in which she writes about. Her compelling narrative and her decision to show every possible side to the story made this book not only exceedingly engaging, but it is also one that was next to impossible to put down.

What I liked about this series the most was the way Bernal has portrayed women. The majority of authors who write their fictional stories about Alfred the Great and this era in history concentrate their efforts on the men of this time, and the women take a more sedate secondary role. Not so with Bernal's books. The women are centre stage, which I found exceedingly refreshing.

As with the first two books in the series, I was drawn to Elizabeth. She is such a warm and wonderful woman who will do anything for her family, even if it is sometimes a little misguided. Another character who I particularly enjoyed reading about was Dalla. It has been two years since Dalla's husband, Rigr, was killed, but her love for him has not diminished. I had high hopes that she would find happiness with Loki, but Bernal was not about to make things easy for her!

As I have already touched upon, the historical detailing of this book has to be commended. Bernal has chosen to paint a vast canvas in which to set her story. Within this canvas, Bernal allows us to walk with Kings and members of the clergy— including the Pope, Norseman and Saxons. Rich or poor, you can discover them all between these pages. This rich tapestry of life gave this story an incredible sense of depth. The depiction of the sea battle was particularly well drawn. This was undoubtedly a violent time, and Bernal has not shied away from the brutalities of the era, but at the same time, she has an author's intuitive understanding of when to stop and change the scene, therefore, giving her readers a moment to catch their breath.

As with the other books in this series, Bernal has presented her readers with a vast and wondrous cast of characters and, for this reason alone, *The Briton and the Dane: Legacy* is not, in my opinion, a standalone read. This series thrives on political intrigue and complicated sub-plots, so it is imperative that you start this fantastic reading adventure with Book 1.

Having read all of the books in *The Briton and the Dane* series, I now feel slightly bereft that this wonderful story has come to an end. I have thoroughly enjoyed not only Bernal's interpretation of Alfred the Great but also of the women who are so often overshadowed by the men in this era. I look forward to reading more books by this author in the future. Kudos, Ms Bernal.

I Highly Recommend.

Review by Mary Anne Yarde.
The Coffee Pot Book Club.

Pick up your copy of
The Briton and the Dane: Legacy
[Amazon UK](#) • [Amazon US](#)



Mary Ann Bernal

Mary Ann Bernal attended Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, NY, where she received a degree in Business Administration. Her literary aspirations were ultimately realized when the first book of The Briton and the Dane novels was published in 2009. In addition to writing historical fiction, Mary Ann has also authored a collection of contemporary short stories in the Scribbler Tales series. Her latest endeavor is a science fiction/fantasy novel entitled Planetary Wars Rise of an Empire. Originally hailing from New York, Mary Ann now resides in Elkhorn, Nebraska.

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Posted by Mary Anne Yarde at 05:00