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An Interview with Mary Ann Bernal

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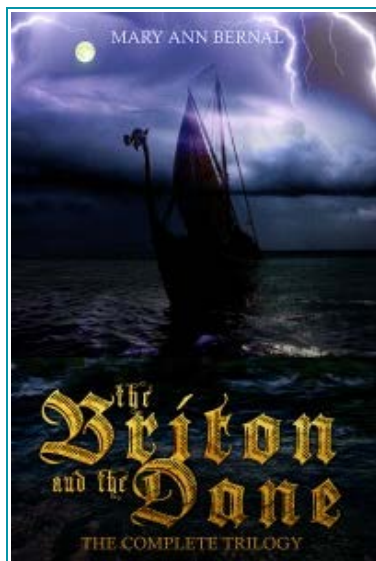
Please help me welcome Mary Ann Bernal to my blog today. Don't forget to leave a comment in order to be entered into today's prize drawing. Mary Ann will be giving away a print edition of *The Briton* and *theDane:Legacy*.



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What genre(s) do you write in and why?

My genre is historical fiction because I love history. While my stories are set in Anglo-Saxon Britain when the Vikings terrorized all of Christendom, I also am interested in Ancient Egypt, and Greece, but the rise and fall of the Roman Empire runs close to trumping my interest in British history, jeopardizing my Anglophilic affirmation.

Tell us about your current series.

The Briton and the Dane novels bring to life the tumultuous ninth century when the formidable Vikings terrorized the civilized world. The epic adventure runs the gamut of deception, treachery, intrigue, and betrayal during a time of war and conquest in Anglo-Saxon Britain.

What is your typical day like?

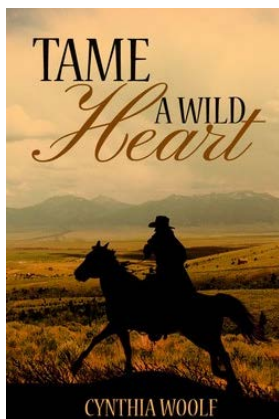
My work day begins bright and early with a mug of coffee while



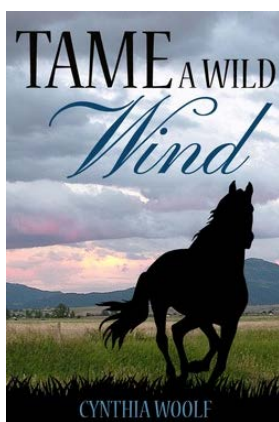
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I wear my book promotion hat. Next cap is for my volunteer work with our military, which includes writing our deployed soldiers and mentoring new members who sign up to "adopt" a military person for the duration of his/her deployment. Then its a little break, hitting the treadmill before lunch and catching up on the news. Finally, the best part of the working day begins – writing time. I do try to stop writing by dinnertime, but I have and do work overtime when my characters demand I finish their chapter. Then life happens, the sun sets and rises, and we start over again. Just love it!

What is your favorite dessert/food?

Have you ever had a Napoleon? That dessert is to die for, and hard to find in the Midwest. My favorite food is Chinese with seafood a close second. However, there is a quaint restaurant in Brandon, UK – Mr. G's – that serves a Yorkshire pudding that's out of this world – I just have to return to England!

How much time do you spend promoting your books?

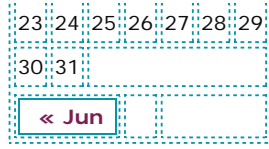
What works best for you?

Book promotion is very time consuming, which infringes upon my writing time since there are not enough hours in a day to excel at both jobs. However, being an extremely organized person with excellent time management skills allows me to give 100% to each career.

When my first book was traditionally published, I dedicated my time to book promotion, which included the creation of my author webpage and fan pages on Facebook, Twitter, etc.. I also established a presence on numerous book promotion sites, which prompted me to create a list of answers to the questions required when setting up an author account since most of the information requested was "standard." Copy/paste saved time when filling out the form, but if a new question was asked, it was added to my list. Once my accounts were established, following up took less time, but it is still time consuming to check each one for messages, comments, etc. My personal choice is to devote a few hours each morning on book promotion, and then spend the afternoon writing. So far this system has worked well for me.

How has your experience with self-publishing been?

Since I have been fortunate to experience both venues (traditional and self-publishing), my personal preference is self-publishing because of the 100% control of one's work (cover, text, copyright, promotion etc.). Learning the publishing



Angels vs Demons Blog Hop



Romancing the Hop

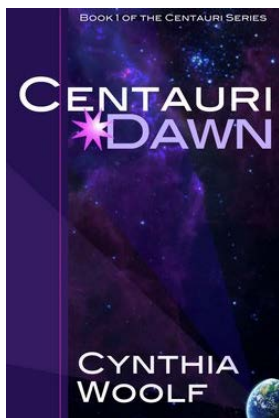


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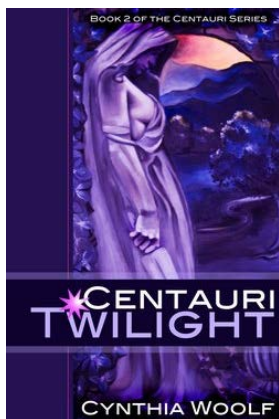
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business was a challenge at first, but the internet provided answers to my questions and my second novel was self-published both in print and electronically within a short period of time – no waiting on the publishing house and/or editor’s email telling me the book hit the shelves and no waiting on royalties. In today’s economy, traditionally published authors are expected to aggressively market their work. If I have to do most of the promotional work myself, why should I have to “giveaway” my copyright and accept reduced royalties? Also remember if a book does not move on a book shelf in three months, its removed and returned, but with the Print on Demand (POD) option your title lives on. I have used both Lightning Source and Create Space and have no complaints with either POD company.

What advice do you have for other authors wanting to self-publish?

One important factor to remember is that covers actually do help to sell a book. Unless you are also artistically talented, spend the money on a professional illustrator. Trust me, this is money well spent. Having someone other than the author edit the manuscript is highly recommended. Another issue is the annoying “typo” – and every published book has one that slipped through the cracks. Do not forget that spell check is not 100% accurate – have one or two friends read the manuscript for typos and check for dropped and/or extra words – better to wait an extra month to publish than to “live with it” once the books goes to print.

What is your next project and when will it be released?

The Briton and the Dane: Concordia will be released in early 2013.

EXCERPT

The Briton and the Dane: Birthright

Preface

The opulent night sky was ablaze with sparkling stars; the familiar constellations were easily identified by their various shapes and sizes. The North Star was fixed in the heavens, its light steady, a beacon to follow as one headed home.

The falling star’s path was seen for miles as the brilliant white

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streak of light moved across the evening sky. There were those who believed that the gods were angry and feared the worst but those who followed the new religion did not believe in superstition and omens and often searched for the uncommon metal left at the bottom of the crater after the star collided with the earth. A sword forged from the heavenly remnants proved to be a formidable weapon; plated armor and shields made from the rare material were thought to be impenetrable.

A slight chill and rising mist created an eerie atmosphere around the Keep at the top of the hill. Fog crept slowly over the valley below the magnificent fortress. Most of the inhabitants traded the wooden benches in the great hall for the comfort of their fur-covered beds while dying embers cast a warm glow for the young couples that still lingered beneath the cloudless sky.

Aurelius walked throughout the valley once the sun set. He conferred with his men who guarded the secret entrance that kept the sanctuary safe from the heathen who still plundered and pillaged the land. But he willingly traded the camaraderie that he shared with his brothers in arms for the love bestowed upon a husband by his wife.

Aurelius crossed the courtyard and headed for the Keep. He gazed upon the open sea as moonbeams bounced along the rippling waves and looked across the starlit heavens in search of the North Star.

Arista added more wood to the dying fire before she lovingly covered her children with a warm fur-lined blanket. She grabbed a cloak to keep the night chill from penetrating her bones as she quietly left the room to join her husband.

"Are the children sleeping?" Aurelius questioned when he embraced his wife.

Arista nodded as Aurelius tenderly kissed her scarred face and held her tightly in his arms. She no longer hid behind a veil nor did she shy away from her husband's touch.

Arista was apprehensive when she rested her head against his shoulder and shivered when she saw the falling star disappear into the darkness of the surrounding mountains.

"Perhaps this night your star will return your memory," she whispered. "Would you want me still when you remember?"

"How could I not want you?" Aurelius quietly replied. "I owe you my life."

"One day the star will take you from me and our children," she murmured. "It beckons you to return to your world."

He held her tightly in a loving embrace and silently watched the flaming celestial bodies race across the horizon.

Elizabeth found her brother Cerdic with Lord Bayen atop the wall-walk. She was thankful for their love and support during the difficult months after word reached the citadel that the King's envoy to the Welsh court had been attacked.

She clearly remembered the day when the horse that carried

the young boy dropped dead before Lord Bayen and Thomas, Lord Richard's advisor. She remembered her anxiety when the lad informed them of the carnage and her fear when he spoke of the dead and gravely wounded. She did not deny that her husband had vanished; what she did deny was the presumption that he had been slain.

Tears swelled when she remembered how Lord Bayen and her brother never left her side during her long and difficult birthing. She remembered their concern when she cried out Stephen's name and begged to die. She remembered the healer's fright when she pointed to the Lord's angel who, she swore, stood before her. She also remembered their obvious relief when the boy that she named Gabriel finally entered the world.

Elizabeth was thankful for their King's benevolence when he pardoned her brother. She was also grateful to Bishop Thurlac when he granted Cerdic a full dispensation to leave the contemplative cloistered life for other worldly pursuits.

Elizabeth could never repay Lord Bayen for his kindness and protection. She was also aware, as were most, of his undying love and devotion. She was grateful for Lord Bayen's friendship and continually prayed that one day he would be able to love another.

The men silently watched the bright colorful fireballs raining upon the earth. Elizabeth did not pay attention to the brilliant particles that lit the evening sky but rather kept her sight upon the steady dim light of the North Star where it remained transfixed in its position.

"Do you think that Stephen gazes upon our star this night?" she asked her brother.

"It has been more than two summers yet you still keep your vigil," Cerdic gently said while he held her in his arms.

"My heart knows that he lives," Elizabeth whispered. "One day he will return to me and our son."



BIO

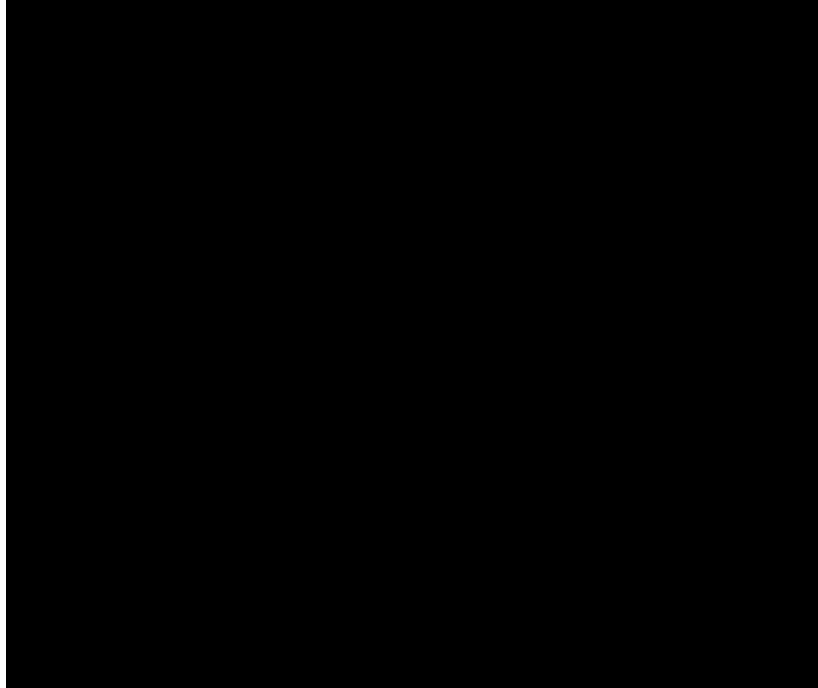
Mary Ann Bernal, author of *The Briton and the Dane* novels, is an avid history buff whose area of interest focuses on Ninth Century Anglo-Saxon Britain during the Viking Age. While pursuing a degree in business administration, she managed to fit creative writing classes and workshops into her busy schedule 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 various reader blogs and promotional sites.

Mary Ann is a New York "expat," and currently resides in Omaha, Nebraska.

Book Trailer



Webpage:

<http://www.maryannbernal.com>

Novels published in association with The Literary Underground

<http://www.litunderground.com/MaryAnnBernal.html>

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