

J. K. Miller II

~Reconciliation is the key to peace~



- Home
- About
- Blog
- Books
- Free Reads
- Upcoming Events
- Works In Progress
- Contact

Meet The Author – Sallie Lundy-Frommer

July 14, 2012

Meet The Author – Mary Ann Bernal

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Welcome one and all to another segment of Meet The Author! I am J. K. Miller II and today we have Mary Ann Bernal with us! Welcome, welcome. And for the readers, her *first* name is Mary Ann; I made that mistake. Mary Ann, it's a pleasure!

As with all my interviews, I like to introduce the readers to the author a bit first. So, why don't you tell us a little about yourself?

In addition to being an incurable romantic Anglophile, I am also a staunch supporter of the United States military, having been involved with letter writing campaigns and other support programs since Operation Desert Storm. Other interests include supporting my grandchildren's extra-curricular activities and serving in various ministries at church.

So, where are you from?

My childhood was spent in Yonkers, New York, where my parents had been born and raised. I, however, was born on the Patuxent River Naval Base while my father was in the service of our country.

Seriously, what made you move from New York to Omaha?

The grandkids. It was difficult becoming actively involved in their young lives with 1,500+ miles in the way. Flying out a few times a year was not working well, especially when young children do not remember people they do not see on a regular basis. As the saying goes, have passport, will travel, and travel I did, arriving in Omaha in 2004.

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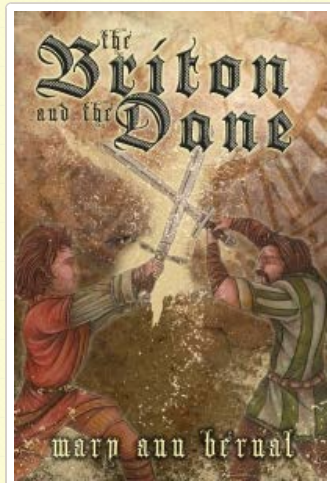
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Ah. At first, I thought you were crazy, but I can understand that. Those of you reading, make sure you realize what's *really* important. Everything else will fall into place. Alright, your website says your interest is in history, specifically the Ninth Century Anglo-Saxon era. What about this specific time captures your attention so?

The Dark Ages is a fascinating time because of the challenges facing the population. Since the Vikings destroyed much of the documentation, one can only speculate about the era. Kings such as Charlemagne and Alfred the Great envisioned educated and knowledgeable people even though war and conquest continued to plague all of Christendom. Our ancestors defeated the odds, an invaluable legacy to emulate.

And obviously this time ties into your books. You've written a trilogy called *The Briton and the Dane*. How'd you come up with the title?



Initially there were two working titles: Erik, the Danish Viking and Erik & Gwyneth, which seemed lame, especially since the story quickly evolved into a major saga with a "cast of thousands." Since God is my muse, He provides suggestions in the middle of the night, and that is how "The Briton and the Dane" title came into being. Of course I wrote it down immediately lest it disappeared by morning, and because I keep a writing pad in the kitchen, I was able to read what I had written when I was wide awake.

Can you tell us what the books are about? The main characters, the storyline, without giving too much away, of course. The readers will need something to look forward to!

The story begins when Gwyneth hides a wounded Danish Viking, Erik, from her father, Lord Richard, who commands the Burh of Wareham where men wishing to serve in King Alfred's standing army are trained. King Alfred and the Danish Viking King Guthrum have already signed a peace treaty and King Guthrum will be returning to his lands in East Anglia. Gwyneth falls in love with Erik, but he is rescued before she speaks with her father who has already arranged her marriage without her knowledge. Meanwhile, the southern coast is being fortified to withstand another Viking assault from the Danish homeland. Gwyneth is kidnapped by one of King Guthrum's favored warriors who brings her to the Danish encampment. There are many characters whose lives intertwine with Gwyneth's plight, and each of them have their own story. Illegitimate offspring covet a crown and warring Norsemen covet the fertile land. Treachery, deception and betrayal determine the outcome of the battle for sovereignty (Birthright) and the battle at sea (Legacy).

Interesting. What inspired *The Briton and the Dane*? I mean, obviously your interest in the era helped, but what created the stories?

Erik was "born" when I was still an impressionable teenager after having seen the period Hollywood blockbusters of the time. A few examples are: "The Vikings," "Knights of the Round Table", "Prince Valiant," and "The Black Shield of Falworth," to name but a

few. I would envision different scenarios with Erik leaving his homeland to “Go A Viking” and what would happen if he were wounded, or if he met a “local” girl or if he stayed in a land he had wanted to conquer. Over the years, many “what ifs” were embedded in my mind, which were considered when I finally set pen to paper.

How long did the books take you to finish?

Each novel took between six and eight months to write the first draft. When you add the editing and formatting process, the end result is about a year.

A lot of dedication goes to creating these stories. If you could give it a genre, what would you label your series as?

Fiction or Historical Fiction.

I see you’ve been interviewed by CBS other television stations! Most writers only dream of that kind of thing happening. What was that like?

The process was very enlightening. Initially you are sent a list of questions to answer, but that does not mean every question is asked; also you need to be prepared to answer a question that was not submitted. When you arrive at the studio, you are taken to a waiting room with other guest speakers, and then it is a waiting game for your time slot. Suddenly you are called upon to enter the sound stage, which was freezing, unless you are sitting under the lights. The hosts do their best to make sure you are relaxed before going live. During commercial breaks, the hosts again speak pleasantries, which was a great way to make you feel at home. I did tape the segment and played the episode on TV. I have to admit, seeing my novels on a big TV screen was just awesome.

That *is* awesome! Have you done any book signings yet?

I have been fortunate to enjoy the book signing experience in bookstores and book clubs. The hostess at my book club signing served “Anglo-Saxon” refreshments, and we shared a bottle of Mead, which was almost as potent as when the honeyed beverage was brewed in the Ninth Century.

I always wondered how Mead and their rum tasted. Can you explain the process of booking a signing event?

Many independent bookstores will host a book signing for local authors, but this involves pounding the pavement, whether you are a publisher or independent author. Most book stores have an events coordinator and that is the person that needs to be contacted to arrange a book signing. Even large chains, such as Barnes and Noble, might support a local author if the author stops in the store and personally meets the events coordinator or manager.

Depending on whether or not you are self-published affects how the books are purchased for the date of the event. The events coordinator at the bookstore that held my book signing event had made arrangements with my publisher to have books shipped to the store two weeks before the event. If the author is self-published, however, he/she will probably be asked to supply the books with the bookseller receiving his/her normal percentage of the markup cost. Unsold books are usually returned to the publisher and/or independent author immediately after the event.

It is also helpful for the author to advertise the event, since foot traffic is not always guaranteed. Having family and friends stop by to show their support does wonders for morale, especially if your event has a low turnout of shoppers.

When is *The Briton and the Dane: Concordia* going to be released?

The book launch is set for early 2013.

I saw a couple short stories you've written. Are there going to be any other novels or stories from you?

Short stories are fun to write and are not as time consuming as writing a novel. I have just learned that a recent submission has been accepted for publication. Information will be posted on my webpage once I receive the details.

Any quirky things you do while writing? You know, pet your dog three times after each completed chapter or something?

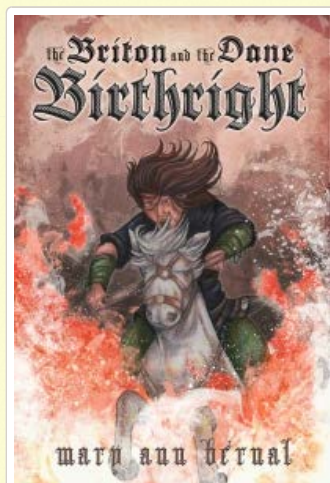
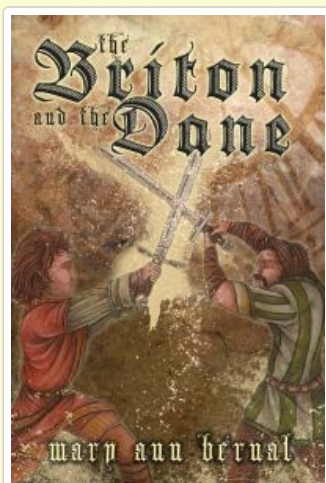
Paying attention...only kidding. I tend to squirm in my chair quite a bit to keep from getting stiff. My children also gave me an electric computer stand. When I find my neck and back "acting up," I just raise the table and type while standing.

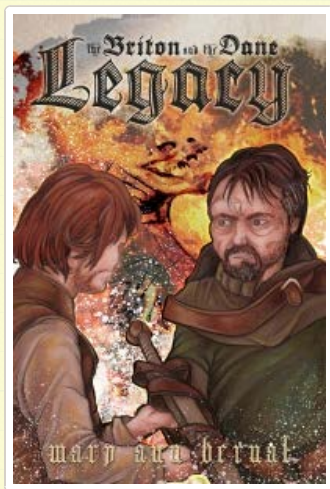
Okay, now, for the aspiring writer out there, what advice would you give them? I mean we all hear the "write every day without fail, even when you don't want to" type statements. Personally, I find that to be a little overstated now, kinda like "live each day as if it's your last". I want something deeper from the heart of Mary Ann Bernal. What advice do *you* have for those looking to make their writing dreams a reality?

Unfortunately, I do not have any deeper, from the heart statements to reveal because I do try to write at least one page a day, just to keep the juices flowing. However, I also look forward to doing "fun stuff," and do not have to think twice about leaving my writing for another day. Also, if going the conventional route is not working for you, then consider self-publishing – it is not as hard as it sounds. Every successful author has had his/her share of rejections and negative reviews, so you are in good company. If you have a story to share, tell it. Persevere and never, ever quit.

Sounds good to me! Again this is Mary Ann Bernal, author of *The Briton And The Dane*. She has several sites for those of you looking to find her work, provided at the bottom of the page. Thanks again, Mary Ann, for joining us today!

Thank you for having me. It has been a pleasure, and fun. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my fans for their interest in my work. Their ongoing support is truly gratifying. One last thing. If anyone has any questions about any of the topics discussed above, they may contact me through my webpage.





For more from Mary Ann Bernal, readers are welcome to visit:

<http://www.maryannbernal.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Omaha/The-Briton-and-the-Dane/279770885805>

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

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

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

<http://www.youtube.com/user/maryannbernal/>

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

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The Literary Underground

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

Barnes and Noble

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/s/mary-ann-bernal>

Book Trailer

The Complete Trilogy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fH1qSGHOSMA>

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