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Interview with author Mary Ann Bernal

Hey again :) Today I had the pleasure of interviewing Mary Ann Bernal who is an avid history buff whose area of interest...



Interview with author R. Murry

Hey all! Today's interview is with author R. Murry who is a Newbie Author at age 64, who has been writing most of his life in...



Interview with author Mark Cassell

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Interview with author duo Wodke Hawkinson

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Interview with author Mary Ann Bernal

BY JACCO, ON JULY 1ST, 2012

Hey again 😊

Today I had the pleasure of interviewing Mary Ann Bernal who 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.

Books & Writing: Do you remember the first story you wrote?

Mary Ann Bernal: My first creative piece was written when I was in the third grade, which impressed my teacher. I still remember my masterpiece: "I saw a sleepy girl ahead, she went right down and went to bed; when she

author duo Wodke Hawkinson which is the name under which authors K Wodke and PJ Hawkinson... >



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who was born and raised in the Philadelphia area (Pennsylvania, USA) and... >



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Hey again! Today's interview

is with author Matthew Acheson who earned his Bachelor's in Computer Science and Ancient... >



Interview with author David Bain

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a community college English professor and a writer with more than 100... >



Interview with author Jay Hollister

Hello! Today I am talking to author Jay Hollister about

himself, his writing and his book! Books & Writing: Can you tell... >



Interview with author RR Gordon

Hey again :) Today's interview is with author RR

Gordon who is a UK-based author who wrote the popular Gull Rock, a fast-paced... >



Interview with author Sadie Brown

Hello! Today I am talking to author Sadie Brown who is

a London based Author and Comedy writer. She moved to London from... >



awoke she thought she'd be a fairy with golden wings." Not too shabby for a seven-year-old.

Books & Writing: Were you inspired by someone or something?

Mary Ann Bernal: As an impressionable teenager growing up in the era of Hollywood blockbusters, I fell in love with such epics as "Ivanhoe," "The Vikings," "Knights of the Round Table," and "King Arthur," to name but a few. It was during this time that the seeds were sown, and my Erik the Viking theme became embedded in my mind, but it would take half a lifetime to fulfill the dream.

Books & Writing: What do you love about writing a story?

Mary Ann Bernal: History is my passion, but text books are written for the scholar, stating dates and facts etc. If I were to teach history, I would breathe life into the people whose names appear on the page. Start the class with a scandalous incident and you have the student's attention. I incorporate this thought when I write – my characters come alive in the ninth century and they experience the same emotions we experience today so the modern reader can relate to the characters' plight amidst the mayhem of the times they live in.

Books & Writing: Can you tell us a bit about your book series "The Briton and the Dane", and the main character(s).

Mary Ann Bernal: The story is set in Anglo-Saxon Britain during the reign of Alfred the Great when the formidable Vikings terrorized all of Christendom. The epic adventure runs the gamut of deception, treachery, intrigue, and betrayal during a time of war and conquest when powerful chieftains and petty kings coveted the lush fertile lands of Britannia.



Initially Gwyneth and Erik were the main characters for the first book, but an emerging supporting cast demanded a greater presence in the story, which is how the trilogy was born. I could not tell the adventure in one book, which delves on father/son relationships, religious turmoil and family life during a time of war and conquest.

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Gwyneth's story is simple, she finds a wounded Danish Viking and hides him while he mends. Meanwhile, the countryside is frantic, fearing another Viking attack. Enter Gwyneth's brothers Stephen and David, who are sent to check the defenses along England's southern coastline. Of course Stephen and David have secrets, which are revealed, but then new characters are introduced. Each novel has a detailed character list and maps, which is also available for download on the Resources tab of my webpage.

Books & Writing: How did you come up with the story for the series.

Mary Ann Bernal: Erik was "born" when I was still an impressionable teenager. I would think of 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.

Books & Writing: How many books do you plan to write for the series?

Mary Ann Bernal: The final installment of the trilogy, "The Briton and the Dane: Legacy," was launched earlier this year. I am in the process of writing "The Briton and the Dane: Concordia," who was introduced in "The Briton and the Dane: Birthright." Future projects include: "The Briton and the Dane: Timeline" and "The Briton and the Dane: The Beginning." Also more characters are demanding their own story – they are not happy that Concordia was favored and want their own novels.

Books & Writing: I understand that the series takes place in the ninth century. Did you have to do lots of research for the series?

Mary Ann Bernal: Research is the fun part – no stress – no deadlines, and with the internet, one no longer has to spend long nights in the library. Since Dark Ages documentation is rare, I used creative license to fill in the blanks. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is an excellent resource for events occurring during the timeline of my story, which gives credence to the plot and subplots in this epic adventure.

Books & Writing: What genre would you say fits best for the series?

Mary Ann Bernal: The genre is historical fiction with action/adventure and romance tags.

Books & Writing: You have also written some short stories. What attracts you in those?

Mary Ann Bernal: I enjoy inserting present day problems into different centuries, being subtle with the themes, telling a story rather than giving a lecture on social mores. It is easier to get a point across if the event took place in the past or in the future – Gene Roddenberry excelled at this concept with the original "Star Trek" series.

Books & Writing: Do you have any tips for aspiring writers?

Mary Ann Bernal: Keep writing and never give up. 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.

Books & Writing: Which author inspires you?

Mary Ann Bernal: Swedish author Frans G. Bengtsson. "The Long Ships" brings to life Viking exploits during the tenth century and tops my list of favorites.

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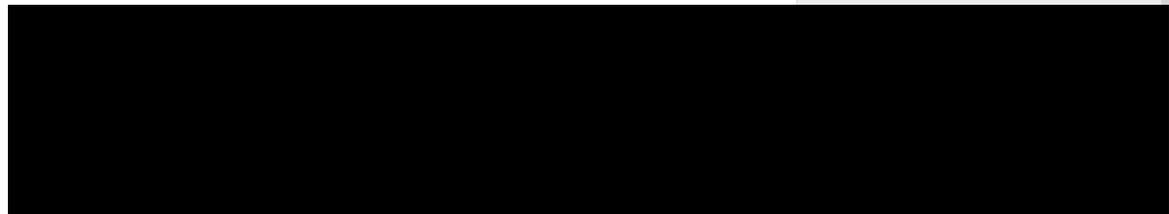
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Book Trailer



Books & Writing: Is there anything else you want to share with the readers?

Mary Ann Bernal: I wish to take this opportunity to thank my readers for their interest in my work. The successful reception of this series cannot be achieved without the support of my wonderful fans.

Below is an excerpt from: "The Briton and the Dane: Legacy"

Erik and Rollo returned to the flagship, jumping skillfully between the heavily manned boats as the fleet awaited Prince Sven's navy while King Alfred conferred with Lord Bayen and Stephen. The Frisian Captain and his seafarers stood at the ready while peering through the fog that enveloped the rough waters. Ribbon lightning crackled within the massive storm clouds that covered the midday sky and a forceful wind whipped the large waves that crashed against the hull.

"My lord, I would have you return to land," Erik told King Alfred. "A storm threatens and fighting in these waters will be grueling even for the most seasoned warriors."

"Nay, I will not be defeated before the battle begins," King Alfred replied while grasping the rail as he lost his footing when a large wave broke over the deck. "If I perish in these waters, it is God's will."

"I see a sail," a seafarer suddenly shouted from atop the mast.

The Frisians yelled war cries when Prince Sven's fleet appeared upon the horizon. The anxious seafarers shouted frantically and praised the gods when they discovered they were evenly matched.

"Sven is aboard the lead ship," Rollo screamed to be heard above the howling wind. "His sail is red and not striped like the rest of the warships."

"Stand ready," King Alfred said as his cloak flapped wildly in the wind and breaking waves washed over the deck.

"My lord, I would wait on lighting the fire ships," Erik told King Alfred. "The wind is against us."

"Cut the ropes but do not set the ships ablaze," King Alfred commanded. "Hopefully we can ram a few vessels with these strong currents."

"Aye my lord," Erik replied as he beckoned Rollo to carry out the King's orders.

King Alfred took his position at the bow as his hand firmly gripped his belted sword, but he took the offensive and gave the order to grapple the ships once they were close enough to board.

"Guard the King at all costs," Erik told Stephen as he watched the seafarers preparing for battle. "I will challenge Sven aboard his vessel, but whatever the outcome you must give me your word that you will retreat with the King if the battle wages against us."

"Nay, I would challenge Sven," Stephen replied. "Neither I nor the King would have you fight your brother."

"Only I can defeat Sven...and there is much that must be settled," Erik reminded him, "but you must remain steadfast. Once I leave this ship free the rope and wait. Sink many vessels and give quarter if the King wishes to be merciful. However, if I were in command, I would spare no one lest they return to fight again."

"I have fought in many battles and have lost many good men. What I tell you now must be said," Stephen began.

"There is no need," Erik interrupted. "I would protect Elizabeth just as you would protect Gwyneth...we shall speak of this no more."

"I am pleased to call you brother," Stephen replied truthfully as they watched the invaders advancing upon the stormy seas.

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