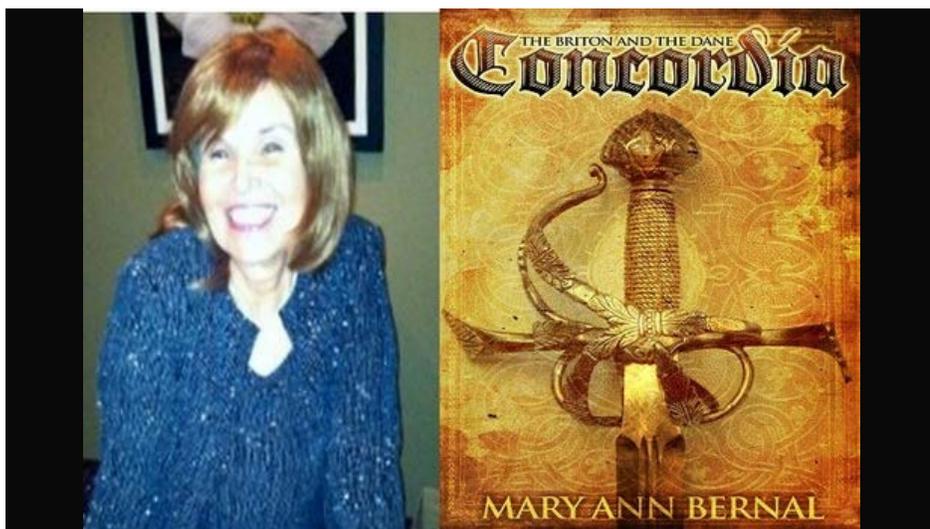


The Briton and The Dane: Concordia by Author Mary Ann Bernal

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About the Author:

Mary Ann is the author of The Briton and the Dane trilogy.

She fell in love with medieval England after she read Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe. Then came the great Hollywood epics such as Knights of the Round Table, Prince Valiant, The Black Shield of Falworth and The Vikings, to name but a few. Add to the mix Camelot and an incurable romantic Anglophile was born!

The Briton and the Dane novels are set in Ninth Century Anglo-Saxon Britain when the

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formidable Vikings terrorized the civilized world. The epic adventure runs the gamut of deception, treachery, intrigue, and complicated relationships during a time of war

and conquest. Resource material such as book club discussion items, glossary of terms, period maps and character lists are available for download at <http://www.maryannbernal.com>.

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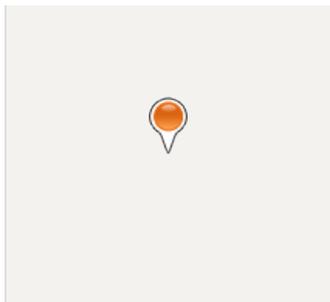
To visit Mary Ann Bernal Author Central page click [here](#)

About the Book:

Travel back in time to late Ninth Century Anglo-Saxon Britain where Alfred the Great rules with a benevolent hand while the Danish King rules peacefully within the boundaries of the Danelaw. Trade flourishes, and scholars from throughout the civilized world flock to Britannia's shores to study at the King's Court School at Winchester.

Enter Concordia, a beautiful noble woman whose family is favored by the king. Vain, willful, and admired, but ambitious and cunning, Concordia is not willing to accept her fate. She is betrothed to the valiant warrior, Brantson, but sees herself as far too young to lay in the bedchamber of an older suitor. She wants to see the wonders of the world, embracing everything in it; preferably, but

The Briton and The Dane: Concordia



Location: Omaha Nebraska

dangerously, at the side of Thayer, the exotic Saracen who charms King Alfred's court and ignites her yearning passions.

Concordia manipulates her besotted husband into taking her to Rome, but her ship is captured by bloodthirsty pirates, and the seafarers protecting her are ruthlessly slain to a man. As she awaits her fate in the Moorish captain's bed, by sheer chance, she discovers that salvation is at hand in the gilded court of a Saracen nobleman.

While awaiting rescue, Concordia finds herself at the center of intrigue, plots, blackmail, betrayal and the vain desires of two egotistical brothers, each willing to die for her favor. Using only feminine cunning, Concordia must defend her honor while plotting her escape as she awaits deliverance, somewhere inside steamy, unconquered Muslim Hispania.

Excerpt: Preface:

Concordia hurried across the deserted courtyard and headed towards the massive Keep that dominated King Alfred's fortified city of Winchester. She kept within the shadows and was grateful for the cloud cover while running past the soldiers patrolling the wall-walk and avoiding the ever-present sentries that walked the familiar streets. She pulled her hood tighter around her face when a sudden gust of wind scattered the willowy clouds and moonbeams illuminated the darkened night. She looked atop the tower and quickened her pace when she noticed a solitary figure

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glancing in her direction.

Concordia waved excitedly as she approached the stairwell and was out of breath by the time she reached the top. Her eyes sparkled and her face was flushed as she removed her hood, her loose tresses caressing her face when touched by the whispering wind, her simple dress accentuating her curvaceous body while her cloak fluttered about her.

Thayer bowed ceremoniously, grasped her hand and kissed the tip of her fingers. He laughed inwardly since he was amused by her reticence as she quickly withdrew her hand, yet he looked questionably into her glowing eyes while brushing aside unruly strands of hair that billowed effortlessly in the wind.

Concordia glanced upon the exotic Moor whom she admired from the moment he had arrived at the court school. She had kept her distance because she feared the awakening emotions that consumed her thoughts whenever she came upon him, whether in the classroom or at the king's table. She remembered her embarrassment each time he caught her staring at him during one of Brother Frederic's lengthy discussions, yet she was pleased when he winked in acknowledgement, and how could she forget the sparkle in his eyes? His dark features added to his mystique, which fueled the budding fire within her soul. Concordia sensed his excitement when their hands touched briefly each time he handed her a book or helped her rise from a chair. She preferred sharing the evening meal at the king's table where Thayer would be found sitting next to the queen, and she still had the flower petals he had given her when they first met. She tried to suppress her feelings, knowing her father would never permit such a match, even though Concordia and Thayer shared a passion for knowledge in a world shrouded in warfare.

"You are trembling," Thayer whispered as he pulled her closer and held her tightly in a loving embrace.

Concordia did not shy away from his touch, but welcomed his protective arms as she tried to control her rising emotions while fearing the truth of his words. Her watery eyes glistened in the moonlight as she buried her head in his chest, taking deep breaths as her mind made sense of her chaotic thoughts while finding the courage to speak the words hidden within her heart.

"Do not be distressed," Thayer said softly as he kissed the top of her head. "Our friendship is unrivaled and I shall cherish the memories."

Concordia freed herself from his embrace and walked towards the wall while admonishing herself for her foolishness. He had spoken the truth, they were just friends, but because she was smitten, she believed he returned her love. She would have been humiliated by her confession and silently thanked the Lord that she had held her tongue.

"I beg forgiveness," Concordia said as she glanced upon the darkened landscape. "I had grown accustomed to your presence in the classroom and will miss our debates. I meant no offense."

"Ah, Concordia, never apologize for speaking your thoughts...that is why I find you so refreshing... I have enjoyed our differing opinions...you will be sorely missed."

Concordia wrapped her cloak tightly around her as wind gusts chilled the night air. She smiled slightly when Thayer placed a velvet pouch in her hand, yet she was hesitant to accept the gift.

"Open it," Thayer whispered in her ear.

Concordia gasped when she saw the gold bead necklace, but she could not curtail her excitement when she held the striking jewels against her chest. The gold beads were interspersed with turquoise and blue glass of various designs, and each bead was elegantly embellished by exquisitely engraved decorations.

"I have never seen such intricate work," Concordia said excitedly as Thayer clasped the necklace around her neck. "There are no words...but I cannot accept such a costly gift."

"You must lest you offend my mother."

"I do not understand...how am I known?"

"I had written my mother of our friendship...she sent this token so you may always remember the bond we share...it belonged to her mother...she insisted."

"Tell her I am most pleased," Concordia murmured as she held the beads gently between her fingers while averting his gaze. "Tell her I shall never forget her kindness."

"Come, the hour grows late...you must be in your chambers before you are missed."

Concordia followed Thayer down the stairs as the clouds once again covered the full moon. She walked silently beside the man who had captured her heart, etching his features into memory, to remember in the days ahead, when she grieved for a love that might have been.

Thayer stopped abruptly when they reached the king's private quarters, grasped Concordia by the shoulders and kissed her gently upon her lips.

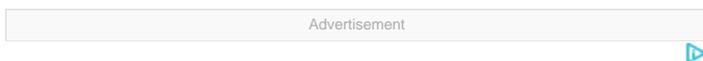
"Forgive my impertinence," Thayer said softly. "I cannot leave without telling you...if only...you must go before words are spoken that cannot be taken back...go!"

"I do not understand," Concordia tearfully replied. "Can you not see..."

"Hush," Thayer interrupted as he placed his finger over her lips. "I know."

"Will I ever see you again?" Concordia asked, her voice choked with emotion.

"If Allah wills it," Thayer replied kindly before he disappeared into the night.









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K-Trina Meador, Cross Plains Books Examiner

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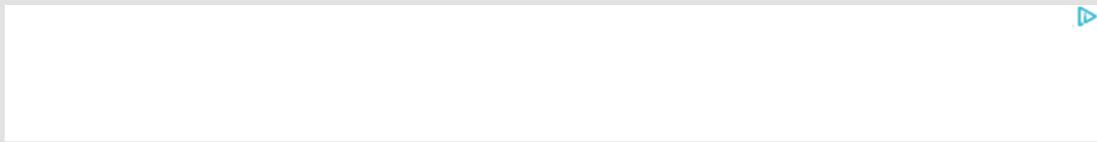
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