

Red Fury Rebellion

Book two of Agricola

Chapter 1

Squawking seagulls circled the blue sky as the Roman galley tugged for its freedom in the restless water of Genoa's waterfront. Slaves piled cargo boxes on the deck, while sailors finished securing the galley to its moorings. Along the pier, pristine soldiers milled among the citizens clustered in groups as they anxiously waited for someone to arrive or wept their good-byes.

Standing on the galley's deck, Julius Agricola inhaled the familiar, dry fragrances. He could easily remember being one of those soldiers striding in their ever-important gait. This time the heat of the sun burned through his filthy tunic, seeped into his ragged beard, and scorched his hair that hung in his eyes and brushed his shoulders. Scars ringed his wrists where the ropes had cut into his flesh and soul as his uncle's threat reverberated like a never-ending drum...*if I have to drag you there like a slave.*

Just two years ago, he had been one of Rome's polished tribunes heading off to Britannia, the land of the barbarians. Now that man was dead....

Chapter 2

...A man's terrified wail echoed through the trees along with the hungry grunts of a boar. The screams were off to his left, Calgacus dropped the leather pack pole and rope beside a nearby bush and looped the rope around it. "Stay. Protect," he ordered to Roi. And then hefted his spear in one hand, and broke into a jog toward the horror ripping through the darkening shadows "Get ready Colin. We're gonna have some fun."

An opening in a grove of trees revealed the boar shaking a man by the leg like a rag while its victim stabbed his knife at the boar's back. He heaved the spear forward and watched as it sank between the boar's shoulders, dropping the animal on the man. "And, that's how a man kills a boar."

After readjusting Colin on his back, Calgacus drew his knife and eased closer. "And this is how you finish him off."

The same moment he sliced the animal's jugular vein, warm pungent blood squirted over his hands. He grabbed the dying animal's hind leg and lugged it off the man's leg. Instantly, the man came to life, screaming and grabbing for his thigh. "Don't move, old man."

"Don't be callin' me an old man," the man spat in gasps. "If I had this leg here, I'd be whipping your ass, lad."

"Well you don't, and I doubt that." Calgacus yanked his rope belt from his waist. "You're lucky to even have a leg. Now shut up and let us tie off your leg before you bleed to death."

The man quickly scanned the area, the dead boar, and looked up. "Us?"

“Colin and me.” Calgacus said, nodding back to quiet little being clinging to his neck while he poured water over the deep gash in the man’s thigh, bringing another frantic scream from the man.

Breaths later, the man asked, “Colin, is it?” He wiping sweat from his leathery face blanketed with a wiry bronze mustache that stretched well past his chin. A gold torc encircled the man’s thick, corded neck, making him to be a chief of some nearby tribe.

Calgacus squatted to assess the mangled mess. “The boy’s, Colin. Mine’s Calgacus of the Trinovante. Yours?”

“Alaric ap Elaina, Chief of the Boresti.”

“Well, Alaric ap Elaina of the Boresti, where’s your men?”

“Fucking lost.”