



BERIC
THE
BRITON
•
A STORY
OF THE
• ROMAN •
INVASION
•
BY
G. A. HENTY
•

Beric The Briton

By

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Dr. Wesley Swift's Library

(Book Review By Ella Rose Mast)

Our author led an exciting and adventurous young life. He lived during the reign of Queen Victoria of Britain (1837-1901). He became quite a story teller. First to his own children. After dinner in the evening he would spend an hour or two in telling them a story that many times would have to be continued the next day. A friend watching the spellbound children suggest he write down his stories so others could enjoy them. This he did, writing approximately 144 books, plus stories to magazines and was dubbed as 'The Prince of the story tellers' and his boys own historian.

To make these stories more interesting they would revolve around a fictional boy hero during some fascinating period of history, historians have recognized his stories as being accurate, thus he made History into a fascinating study. His heroes fought wars, sailed the seas, discovered land, conquered evil empires, prospected for gold, and a host of other exciting adventures. They meet famous personages. They go through the fall of Jerusalem, the Roman invasion of Britain which is the background of this story. And in fact these heroes lived through tumultuous historic eras, meeting the famous leaders of that time in the past. Thus, his books covered the periods of history for his children and others, in a manner that kept the attention of the listener.

Mr. Henty thus began this story of Beric the Britain, to his children, saying that this was dealing with the wars of England and especially the invasion of England by the Roman who became master of most of the Isle of Britain. And this story then tells of the valour with which these people of that land defended themselves which was also acknowledged by the Romans. But this time period also introduced the Britons to the civilization which already existed in Rome. In the end however it proved disastrous to the islanders who had lost all of their military virtues. And this led to no effectual resistance to the Saxons when they came, under the guise of friendship, speedily however they became their masters. But with the Saxon, Danish and Norman blood now in the veins of the Britons this would allow them to be able to rise and under Boadicea their Queen, fight to shake off the oppressive rule of Rome.

In chapter one of this book then Henty's children would be shown that at one time their country was in bondage to Rome. And their thinking that Britain was conquered was an insult and a lie for Britons were not conquered they were just silent, and they were waiting for a chance to fight for their freedom.

In all of this time of invasion by the Romans. Then Britain, which was divided into many different tribes, would see one tribe after another arise and fight the Romans but they were working as a divided country with different leaders. Thus against the whole strength of the Romans, only one tribe in Britain would rise and be defeated, and Rome was thus taking Britain bit by bit.

Now; Beric had lived among the Romans for four years and he likes them, but also he fears them, for they are a great people. They have splendid mansions and their regular life, their manners and their ways in which they can transfer their thoughts to white leaves (pages of a book), so that others can read of them later, and understand as to what men thought and did in the long bygones was amazing.

As Beric came home from his captivity by the Romans, his companions accused him of being half Romanized after living with them for four years. Beric was also quick to point out that because of his stay in Rome, he saw much to be admired and that it might be a good thing if Britain would copy. For the Romans were far more polished and in many respects they were a

greater people than the Britons. But that did not mean that he would think the Romans should come to Britain and be their master. Many things in life are desirable, but they are nothing to FREEDOM.

Yes, said Beric, the Romans are grave, and courteous in their manners to each other. They obey their own laws, yield obedience to their superiors. But the superiors respect they rights, and those below them. The highest among them feels that to touch the property or life of the lowest, would not be tolerated. But on the other hand Beric feels his blood boil at the contempt in which the Romans feel for the Britons. He is disturbed by their greed, their rapacity their brutality, their denial to Britain of all rights. In the eyes of the Romans, the Britons are counted as savages. That Britain might be useful to them to till the ground, but if they become troublesome, they were to be hunted down. The Romans thus were respecters of their power, and learning, but to the Britains they were oppressors.

Beric was listening to the men of the other tribes of Britain and they would say, what good does it do to fight the Romans, you are soon under their yoke. But there seems to be great change coming, for as the Gauls came into Britain, and were on their eastern sea coast, then that part of Britain where Beric lived had changed from their former lifestyle of hunters roaming the forest, to home builders, and town builders, and their home were then solid. They had herds of cattle and they also tilled the ground for food.

Beric then think that probably our ancestors set themselves against the Gauls and their customs but they were adopted and Britain benefited from them. Thus when the Romans are departed from Britain then Britain should adopt that which is good, and orderly and decent in their customs and laws. Then Beric stresses that to conquer the Romans the Britains must become united. For the further they are from the land they have conquered the harder it will be for the Romans to hold it. But to drive out the Romans we must have one great leader whom all the tribes now in Britain will follow, just like the Roman legions who obey one general. This seemed at that time an impossible prospect, and certainly would not come while they were under the heel of the Roman legions.

Looking back in their history then Britain would see that Cassivelaunus was betrayed by Trinoleanter. King Cunobeline was a good king but when the hour came, the kingdom broke up into pieces. Veric the chief of the Cantii went to Rome and invited the invader to aide him against his rivals at home. And not a man had marched to the aid of Caractacus and Togodamnus. When Caractacus was driven a fugitive to hide among the Brigantes, their Queen had handed him over to the Romans. Thus Beric wonder where they would find a leader more fitted to unite all Britain than was Caractacus, the son of the king whom all Britain recognized and paid tribute to. A Prince who had learned wisdom from a wise father, a warrior enterprising, bold, and capable, a true patriot. (Now remember that all of these people, even the Romans, were relatives. Their ancestors were of the 12 tribes. You can trace this through the scriptures.)

Now; back in Britain after his four years as a captive of Rome then here is Beric, a lad not yet 16, and he is the son of Parta, the chieftains of one of the divisions of the great tribe of Iceni who occupied now known in Britain as Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and Huntington. They had been defeated by the Roman and submitted to Roman authority. And Beric's father had died in that struggle.

Here in Britain at that time among the many tribes the women ranked with the men. And even when married the woman then retained her authority after the death of her husband, she than became the sole head of the sub-tribe. Thus it had been that the Romans had demanded that she hand over her son to them as a hostage. Beric was only 11 years of age when he came a hostage to Rome. Parta gave her son many instruction, such as to remember his past, his heritage, and not to become to Romanized. And his mother hoped to wait for another uprising and then she would send word to him to watch for a chance to escape.

In the meantime he was to learn all that he could as to why the Romans were so successful in conquering other people.

Caractacus had also been sent to Rome and thus it was thought that a great leader would be needed to bring victory to the Britons. And since this tribe to which Beric and his mother belonged were the strongest of the tribes surely this leader should come from this tribe.

Thus Beric had gone to Rome and he carried out the instructions of his mother, and he was soon learning all that he could. First he learned the language. Then he learned the elements of Roman law, and then he learned their way at Arms.

Caius was a fine man, and he and his wife soon noticed how strong and eager to learn, this boy from Britain has become. Caius reminds his wife that Britons were a fine race, although in disposition as fierce as wild cats, and not to be trusted. Then he said but one can never be sure of these tamed wolves, sometimes they turn out to be valuable allies and assistants. At other times they grow into formidable foes. All the more dangerous because of what they learned from us. Julia the wife of Caius said that what she liked about Beric was that he was very fond of their own little Berenice. She had noticed that these two would sit for hours and talk. Berenice would tell Beric of things about Rome, about their kings, and counsels and he would tell her about their hunting of the wolves that plagued Britain. He would tell her of the wild boars and legends of his people, who seemed to have always been at war against someone.

After Beric had resided for 3 1/2 years at Camalodunum this Roman city now in Britain, there came a great grief for the damp air from the valley had long affected Julia and she gradually faded and died. A year later Caius thinking his young charge seemed to have been thoroughly Romanized, he should be permitted to return home. Boduoc had carried messages to Beric from his mother during his bondage. Boduoc was a relative of his mother. And now that Beric was coming home he had many so-called Roman ideas. And Boduoc who had hated the Romans for so long was now afraid that young Beric had perhaps learned too much while in captivity. His loyalty to Beric prevented him from telling the rest of the tribe that Beric now was Romanized. However as time went on he would realize that Beric had fallen back into the ways of his youth, as easy as tho he had never left.

Beric thus now coming up to 16 years of age was considered a grown man. And people then began to listen to his stories of all that he had learned while in Roman hands. From his father one of the most eloquent and influential of the chiefs of the Iceni would come to Beric this power of speech. Some of the less educated of the tribe would refer to Beric as the 'Roman' among them. But other were wiser and they looked upon him as a great Chief. Beric told of the brave youth that had thrust his hand into the flames and suffered it to be consumed in order to impress the invader with a knowledge of the spirit that animated the Romans. And of the three men who held against a host, the bridge that their friends were breaking down behind them. Beric's people then decided that if he could stir his people by his tales of the deeds of the Romans whom they considered their enemy then some day this young man would be Rome's most formidable foe.

King Prasulagus and his Queen Boadicea are now listening to this young Britain and watching his progress. They are thinking in time this young lad would be worthy to take his place in history by the side of Caractacus and Cassivelaunus.

On a visit to the Roman city now in Britain, Boduoc would not enter the city with Beric his friend, so he would stay outside and wait for the young man. As Beric enters he remembers this city of Camalodunum for the work of art, and as he walked on into the city he saw the streets full of people. Traders from Gaul, and Italy, Roman Artisans, and workmen walked around. And shops from all walks of life and countries thrived here. The only shops which Beric passed which he was interest in were the shops of the scribes. At some he found the writings of the Greeks, and Roman poets and historians. And he thought that if this city is ever sacked sometime he wanted to get these writings. He did not pay any attention to the Temple of Claudius, or the magnificent baths that were now in place. He hurried on toward the village of Caius Muro which stood somewhat beyond the more crowded parts of this town, which is now in this Part of Britain that the Romans now control. Beric was on the way to see an old friend who was now in Britain. Caius had been sent with his daughter to Britain to take control of the Army. Beric will not stay long this visit. But he sees his old friend Caius and the girl Berenice and he thinks that her father

should send her, or take her back to Rome for it will be too dangerous some day for her to be in this conquered city.

Retracing his steps Beric goes back out of the city to find his old friend waiting for him and after eating a bit they set out for home, through the woods. They will have to be travelling after dark and they are thinking of the wolves who are become so vicious in Britain at this time.

After young Beric left then Caius thinks of that advice for he now knows that since Nero came to the throne in Rome that the men who he has been sending to the garrison in Britain are of not very good quality. And they are also ill trained, thus maybe he should send his young daughter back to Rome. But since his wife died he has tried to keep his daughter with him at least until she is older.

As Beric and his friend moved along the path in the forest it became dark and Beric, his eyes not used to this dark light, keeps stumbling over roots and so forth. His friend thinks they better slow down before he falls or sprains his ankle, but Beric keeps pushing on. There will be a little hut not far ahead, and they can rest there.

Then on the night air come a cry, it is the cry of a woman, maybe the wolves have attack her and the men begin to run. The cry comes again and they know she must still be in the building, but the wolves must be trying to break in. The men ran until they reached the clearing. And yes, a pack of wolves were around the hut and even some of them were on the roof digging through the covering of tree limbs and dirt. The men then began to yell telling the woman to open the door when they got there. The wolves scattered as they heard the men. Thus they reached the hut and were soon inside where they saw a young woman and her three small children. She stood with a spear in her hand, and there was a dead wolf on the floor the first one through the hole in the roof.

Soon they heard the wolves back again, and on the roof. It seemed that a wood pile was against the hut so that was an easy way for the wolves to get up on the roof. The men positioned themselves and soon eyes were in the hole that the dead wolf had come through. Now more holes were being made in the roof. Here came another wolf through the first hole and then another and both were taken care of. At the sound of much scratching above them then a spear was thrust up hard into that sound and they hear a wolf cry and a fall from the roof, and the sound of the other wolves falling on the body of their dead comrade.

Where is your husband, Beric inquired of the woman? He left this morning to be in place for the wolf hunt in the morning. No one travels through the woods at night for fear of the wolves which have now come south after the hunters struck against them in the north. It was then learned that the woman was thinking that Beric would be returning that night for she had seen him that morning as he passed on his way to the city.

The fight went on and on, and from the sounds on the roof it sounded as though reinforcements had arrived. The men talked of firing the hut and each carrying a child make a run for the trees and climb to safety. But what time was it, how long until daylight. Boduoc decided it must be two or three hours past midnight, and if that be true then help should be getting close for he had ordered it that very morning.

The woman said that there was a cow horn in the hut. They used it to call their cattle from the forest. Boduoc then blew on the horn and it seemed to scare the wolves for a time. Again and again he blew a blast on the horn. But finally the wolves came back and soon they were on the roof. And then two wolves came through the bigger hole and were quickly disposed of. At this moment there came a sudden sound, and the wolves on the roof seem to be leaving. And then the people in the hut heard a loud shout. Thank God they are here as I planned, said Boduoc as he opened the door and here were a score of men with lighted torches. One was the husband of the woman and father of the children. He was so thankful to find all safe and sound, even tho the bodies of nine wolves were in a pile inside the little hut. It was then decided that the woman and the children should now go with the men for surely the wolves would be back. The cattle were safe in a stockade to the west and people were there to protect hem.

After a 3-hour walk the party came to the little village of Cardun. This village stood on a knoll rising from swamps, through which a branch of the Stour River ran. The contrast between it and the Roman city but 22 miles away was striking. In the center of the village was Parta's abode. The walls were of mud and stone. The roof was high to let the water run off more easily. It contained one central hall surrounded by half a dozen small apartments. The people lived in huts, in one room with a hole in the centre of the roof to let the smoke out. No furniture was seen but piles of hides which became beds at night were along the walls. Parta's dwelling was more sumptuously furnished. The fireplace was in the centre of the lower hall. And the walls were covered by skins, mostly of wolves. Hams of wild boars and swine hung from the rafters, as well as wild duck and fish and other articles of food. Parta's apartment led from the back of the dais. And that of Beric was next to hers. The followers and attendants stretched themselves on the floor of the hall at night time.

A shout of welcome came to Beric and his party as they crossed over the rough bridge over the stream and came into the village. Some 1500 men were here gathered for the wolf hunt in the morning. In the morning, at daybreak the men were in their positions of a long line, and two ends that would come together at some time. They then drove the wolves to the river where they would be killed. The dogs were soon let loose and then from the forest came many sounds. Finally the battle would be joined, and over 4000 wolves would be killed by the time the village had been circled.

As Beric came into his mother's home, he was surprised to see a Druid talking to his mother who seemed to be very angry. The Druids dwelt in the forests and if anyone was to see them they must journey to them and ask for their counsel beneath the sacred oak, or in the circle of the magic stones. But here one stood talking to his mother who seemed very agitated. It seemed that the message that the Druid had brought to Beric's mother was that the Roman governor was preparing an attack against the Sacred Isle (Glastonbury perhaps) with the plan to destroy the religion of the Britains and their Priests, and their sacred ground.

Beric said, this is terrible news. But when the call comes I am ready to fight for my country with the sword of the Sword of the Romans. Beric is then told that for now the people are to be quiet but that the Druids were out all over the country stirring the people. This time it will take all of the people not just one tribe to stop the Romans. The Druid declared that God would fight for them if the Roman try this. Other men pressed into the hall demanding that war should be declared. The Druid cautioned them to sharpen their arms and prepare for the conquest, but do it quietly.

Beric was appointed as the chief next to his mother in this tribe, and the people were warned to obey his orders. The Druid then called young Beric to his side and laying his hand on his head raised the other to heaven and implored God to bestow wisdom, and strength upon this lad, the son of their former leader.

The men were next told to go home and wait for some would be taught as to how to fight to win. Young Beric had learned this when he was in Roman custody. This night there was high feasting in Cardun. A bullett and three swine were slain on the orders of Parta and a great number of earthen jars of mead were broken open. And the principal men feasted in the great hall of Parta. While those outside made merry also.

Beric is now thinking, he wishes he was older and more well known before he leads his people against the Romans. He knows that the Britons are careless of their lives. They believed in a future life so if they were to fall fighting for their country they would get a reward later. Cowardice was almost an unknown vice in this land. He knew that the Romans had conquered many people, and that there were many thousands of them who would come to conquer the Britons. But the Britons believed in one great Supreme spirit whose power pervaded everything. They worshiped HIM in the forests, in the streams and in the heavenly bodies. Through the Druids they consulted Him in every undertaking. If the answer was favourable, they followed it. If unfavourable they sought to change it by sacrifice and offerings to the Priests. They believed firmly in life after death and they thought that if they died they would be transported out to the Happy Island. Thus they did not worry about death in battle or otherwise.

The next morning 100 men were summoned. These men were picked leaving at least one man of working age to care for the family. Beric then began teaching them manoeuvres he had learned from the Romans. These Britons could not understand for they were used to fighting in whatever fashion seemed good to them as individuals. Beric chose his friend Boduoc as his second in command. Then appointed ten men as sub officers and sergeants. This company of men were finally learning what their young chief was trying to teach them, and they begin to realize that this should help them against the Romans for they knew that the Roman line of men was what was so hard to break in any battle.

The next week 200 more men were called and they watched the first company and then fell into formation. Thus, their army grew. Returning to Cardun one day, Beric is surprised to see much lamentation. He hurries to his mother, but she is okay. But he learned that the Roman has struck again. They had taken the Isle of Mona the home of the Druids. And now the Druids saw that their gods were not going to help them so they had appealed to the regular Britons and they moved from tribe to tribe, so as to get the men to take up arms to throw out the Romans.

A week after this news came then Beric made another trip to Camalodunium. He was surprise that the Romans were not disturbed by the news of the destruction of the Druid centre of Mona. He saw Berenice and she was glad to see him, and he learned that her father was away in the war. He tells her of his peoples fight with the wolves, and they talk of the difference between the women here and in Rome. For here in Britain the women are as tough as the men, many are leaders of their tribes. As Beric walked home that day, he wondered how he could save Berenice when the Britons were finally victorious.

A fresh misfortune then occurred. Prasutagus their king had died and he had left half of his estate to the Roman Emperor. Prasutagus was the recognized leader of the Iceni tribe of which Beric of his mother's side belonged. But this man had also been a traitor for they were now finding out that he had left half of his estate to the Romans. And to his wife and two daughters would go the other half, if the Romans were to permit it. The people thought that it would have been better if the man had died years earlier for his wife Boadicea was different from her husband and would never have bowed to the Romans.

As Beric and his mother talk of this situation, it was decided that the time had come for all Britain to stand together against the Romans. For surely the Romans would next strike at Boadicea and her tribe to take them before she would recover from the loss of her husband. Then news came that Boadicea was going to the Roman city to protest the outrage of her daughter being insulted by a Roman officer.

The news spread inside their tribe and men were ready to follow their Queen, but Beric held them back. He and his mother cautioned them to wait for the orders from their queen. Then, at that time, Beric would lead them. But this time all Britons must rise to stand together against the Romans, or they will be slaves forever. Rome had been able to conquer so far because they always stood as one, while Britain was divided into tribes and more tribes and then had a Queen and King over them. They had never all stood at once and together.

Beric was then called to meet with the Queen, and he and his mother went to the meeting place. As the chariot with the Queen and her two daughters arrived, then Beric noticed that she was a tall and stately woman. Her yellow hair fell to her waist. She wore no ornaments or insignia of her high rank. Her dress and those of her daughters were careless and disordered, indicative of grief and mourning. But the expression on the face of the Queen was one of indignation and passion not humiliation. She stood erect before them and told of her humiliation by the Romans for they had punished her for coming to the Romans to defend her daughter.

Here now in the grove at this meeting the Druids now advanced. When they reached the Sacred Oak tree they circled it seven times as they chanted and arranged themselves in formation, with the chief Druid in front. They had already consulted privately with the queen, and all had declared for war. but it was necessary that the decision should be pronounced solemnly beneath the shade of the Sacred Oak tree.

The Ceremony continued and then the chief Druid asked: "why come ye here, woman?" The Queen replied: "I come as a suppliant to the gods, as an outraged Queen, a dishonoured woman and a broken hearted mother. And in each of these capacities I call upon my country's gods for vengeance."

Then in passionate words she told the story of the indignities which she and her daughters had suffered. She dropped the wrap around her upper body and turned to show the marks of the Roman rods across her back. This drew a shout of fury from the chiefs around her. The Druids retired to go through their mysterious ceremony saying they would return soon. The rest of the gathering retired into small groups to wait all though they all knew that the message would be, "MOVE AGAINST THE ROMANS, ALL BRITAIN NOW WOULD MOVE TOGETHER FOR A FINAL STRUGGLE WITH THE ROMANS."

The head Druid came back to the gathering and he said, The gods have spoken, too long have the Iceni stood aloof of their country man, therefore the gods have withdrawn their faces from them, thus punishment has fallen upon them But the time has come XXX-the gods have thus spoken, STRIKE FOR YOUR COUNTRY AND FOR YOUR OUTRAGED QUEEN.

Boadicea then turned to the Chiefs of her tribe and raised her arm for silence. Then she spoke and said: "I am a Queen again over a race of men. No longer do I feel the stripes for each shall ere be washed out in Roman blood. But since I know that many of you have come for this day a long way then I have prepared a feast for you." And she then led them to another part of the glade where her servants had prepared a feast for the crowd. Then as soon as the feast was over the Queen called the chiefs round her and the Druids joined the group.

It was decided that they would wait until all the tribes had been notified and were ready for the march on the great Roman city installed now among them. Within this city of Camaldunum there was much uneasy feelings since messengers had been sent out to see how the people were taking this whipping of their Queen. The messengers then returned to report that the people no longer crouched at the sight of a Roman. They now bore themselves defiantly. At night there were meetings in the forest and the women were heard singing chants and they performed dances, which evidently had hidden meanings.

Then a message is sent to Caius the, who had been so good to Beric, when he, as a lad, was in Roman hands. This message has no signature. But he knew who was trying to tell them something so as to save Berenice. He also knew that the battle would soon commence and the Romans were not prepared to defend the city. Too long had they thought themselves invincible. But also they knew they had not been kind to those whom they had conquered at least in the last several years.

Men now streamed into camp and Beric thought of how ill trained these men were for the mission ahead of them. They did not know of the training of Beric's men which at least would have helped them. But it was too late now, the time was upon them.

Thus the day came and the men moved into position quietly around the Roman City. Three women then came from the city, pre arranged to report that the city was not well defended, although the inhabitants were uneasy. The report then went out, Camalodunum would be attacked at daybreak. No fires would be lighted and the forest outside of the city would seen quiet. Men thus slept under the stars and many just wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay down under the trees. Queen Boadicea and her daughters and Parta and the other women of rank had come in their chariots. This camp was now just four miles from Camalodunum but no one would have guessed that anyone was around unless they had stumbled on resting people in the dark. The General protector of this Roman city was in the west overseeing the fighting with another tribe of Britons. Thus the plan called for the fall of this city before he could return.

Beric had made his plans to rescue Berenice and the old scribe. They were to be taken to the chariots and be protected. As day was breaking then the men moved out, each to the spot which he had been assigned to. They preceded to the place of the gates of the city and there they waited. In the distance then came the sound of the horn. It came time after time and then came the cry of the warriors as they dashed to the gates. Each man as he reached the gate threw down the faggot that they carried and Beric then led the way up and soon they stood on top of the wall.

He then ran to the home of Caius Muro and called and the door was opened and the old scribe answered his call and sent a slave for Berenice who came down the stairs dressed as a British boy. And with these two in tow, then Beric started back on his way out of the city. His men were breaking into buildings and no one paid any attention to this small group surrounded by Beric's ten picked men. Berenice was crying she was wishing for Beric to come with her, but he could not. He took off the torque that he wore on his collar that showed the emblem of rank and handed it to the driver of the chariot and told him to use it if they were stopped.

Beric had no stomach for this massacre of the Romans but there was no way he could stop it. In half an hour the carnage was over except for those who had fled to the Temple for safety. Queen Boadicea came into the city and some of her men asked for the privilege of taking the temple. Beric called his men with his horn, and as they came he cautioned them that they should let the Trimobantes try to take the Temple. But he cautioned his men that he thought they would soon be called on to help. And after the Queen's men had failed and many had fallen then Beric gave the orders and he told men to kill 200 of the cattle in the area and bring in their hides. These were piled at the walls and the gate and oil poured on them. The men with blazing faggots advanced and fires were started and as flames mounted higher and higher then Beric knew that they had won and the Temple would soon fall. Queen Boadicea entered the temple and advancing to the altar she waver her spear and immediately her men brought down the massive figure of Jupiter, Mars, and Minerva, as well as the stone statue of the Emperor Claudius.

The altars of Mona had steamed with the blood of the Druids but here in Camalodunum those of the Romans were wet with the gore of Roman legionnaires. That night the Temple was burned to the very ground.

The chief then ordered their followers to make their way through the burning town and gather by tribes outside the city, then rest for the next morning they would march to meet the returning Roman army of 50,000 men.

The Queen summons Beric for she sees that he, although young, he possesses knowledge of warfare that the rest of the Britains do not possess. And thus they plan the attack on this marching Roman column that is coming. It was decided how each tribe would be located, and how each and when they should attack the Romans. Thus leaving Beric and his men to stop the Romans who always kept their best troops in reserve which decides the fate of the battle. There was a swamp in front of them not too deep for the Britons to cross but the Roman horses would not be able to cross.

In a few minutes the Roman legions were seen advancing with part of the cavalry in the front and the rest in the rear. The Queen and Parta were on a small hill overlooking the attack scene. The queen raised her spear high in the air and the Britons with a wild cry poured down upon the Romans. The battle was fast and furious, then it was seen that the Britons could not break through the front lines, for the Romans always brought up reinforcements all of the time. Then Beric turned over the control of the tribe of his mother to a captain and he moved to the side of the Queen as she wished. For now Queen Boadicea had seen how the Romans fought.

Then the Roman column begun to move forward, although in spots the Britons seemed to have stopped them, still they always reformed and then began to move. And the Romans then began to shout for they thought they were succeeding. Thus Beric informed the Queen that it was time for her men to fight. Beric then moved at the head of the Sarci tribe. He gave orders for the men to move down to the attack but marching in formation.

Four companies would attack the Romans in front, the other five deep would march down on the Roman flank. Then Beric sounded his bugle and ten deep the 400 men with him moved down the slope. The Iceni were engaging the Romans in the front but seeing Beric's men coming they moved to the side. Never had the Romans seen these barbarians fight in this manner. At a shout of their officers the Romans started to move forward to meet the Britons. Beric had increased the length of the spears of the Sarci and this proved of a vital advantage and they brought the Roman column to a halt.

Gradually the Romans were pressed backward. The Sarci on the flank then moved forward and then Beric blew his horn, and his men with an answering shout moved forward. This plan of attack had worked and the Britons were winning the war. But as the Roman lines begin to break, the Britons forgot their new way of fighting and reverted to their old ways. They threw down the long spears and rushed in for close contact with their short weapons. Each man was fighting for himself. The Roman cavalry broke away and galloped toward what they thought was their fortified city.

Beric sounded his horn and the men began once more to reassemble. More than 2000 Roman soldiers lay dead. The Queen then gave orders and the wounded Britons were taken care of. Every able-bodied man not busy was to form a column as they would follow the Romans to strike before they recovered. Horns were sounded and the Britons went back to their former positions then begin to form for the march ahead. Now they presented quite a sight as they were regrouped, and then they moved to protect the sacred island.

On the morrow the battle began out side the destroyed city. The Romans were drawn up in orderly deep. The Britons struck the front lines time after time but the Roman lines did not break. The women in their chariots and the wagons had come in behind their men, thus trapping the men into this battle to the end. Beric could not bring his company to the front to help as the pressure was too great, he shouted to the men but they could not hear him. Then the Roman Legions began to move. They parted to let the horses through, while the Britons were trapped with the wagons and chariots. Beric's men had retreated until they reached the woods where they gave way to their sorrow and anguish. What had happened they could not as yet see or understand.

As the army move north to face he rest of the Romans then Beric and Boduoc were talking. Beric sees that there is defeat in the air for the Britons are again banking on their great numbers to overwhelm the Romans. But they are now without commanders. Each is fighting on their own order. Beric knows that if defeated the Romans will be thinking of vengeance, and his people will be fighting there until the last man. Thus planning for defeat then Beric plans to return home and then regather to protect their own homeland.

Boduoc listened then returned to the men to get a small number of them to hold back. Beric found his mother and told her of their plans saying if there was no victory then he hoped to see her back in their camp. Beric then left orders that the daughters of the mother of the Queen was to take Berenice through the forest until they would meet some Roman soldiers or within sight of their camp and then she was to declare herself. The old scribe was sad at the way things had gone. But both knew that only one of them could be victorious, the Britons or the Romans. The Britons never worried about death for they expected that if they died they would go to the Sacred Isle and all of their troubles would be over. For they believed in life after death. Therefore if they fell they would be happy and free from all troubles, that awaits this unfortunate land.

The Britons came to London and found that the Romans had not stopped here. They were anxious to see what was left of the other Roman army so had moved on and London was almost unprotected. Thus the town was sacked and burned. And then the Britons had set out after Suetonias and they were again followed by a great train of wagons and chariots carrying the women and the spoils. Beric had lost all control over this advancing column. After all they considered him a new comer so why take orders from him. Beric did not enter London but set out for the north where the great battle was still to be fought. They came to the city of Verulamin and supposedly this was a fortified city but they attack and took the city after not much resistance. And the city was set on fire.

It was next decided to march west so as to be joined by other tribes, for they would then meet Suetonius who was returning from Wales with his Roman army. But as they marched then Suetonius had by passed the Briton marching column and had gathered up a garrisons of other Roman fortified positions. This was what Beric had worried about. It would have been much easier to take each fort separately then it would be now when they would have to meet the whole of the Roman legions. They knew that a description of the fortified outpost just ahead of them would be hard to take. For surrounding this camp was a moat of water. Then a high wall and then further on another wall but in between were sharp stakes They thought that they could maybe

by pass this fortified city but Beric thought that they should take this position thus not leave anything at their backs. Thus, they took the fortified city with the leadership of Beric. Then the men with Beric returned to home base and they then began to plan as to what they should do next.

Was the Queen still alive and also Beric's mother? They had heard nothing from either of them. And then Beric and friends then decided that as the Romans came and saw their fortified forts destroyed they would be coming for revenge. Aska, one of the old chiefs, called the men to him, and he told them that if they had not obeyed the orders of young Beric they would not be standing there. If the others had followed his advice, they would not be mourning after such a defeat. This, he said, Beric then gave orders for runners to move out to all the other tribes telling them to move north and drive their cattle before them. Leaving no food behind for the Romans. And then it was decided that this tribe should then take cover in the Swamp. They would ask the Fen people if there was a vacant island where they could set up a base. And as it worked out this was decided. And they then took to the swamp with the Fens and found an island and they began to move.

By boats the people were brought in to prepare the camp. Some of the swine were brought in the boats at times. But flat bottomed boats had to be built to move the cattle. The progress was slow but the Romans were coming and that made the progress seem more hurried. The Romans then built a fort on the edge of the swamp as though they planned to stay a long time. The Britons scouted the camp and they planned to destroy it before it was properly manned. And they did just that. It was a camp in the shape of a horse shoe and Beric made plans and one night they carried out those plans and the fort went up in smoke. This made the Romans more angry and they began to probe the swamp trying to find the Britons who by this time had found many passages by which to travel to, and from.

Home base was established and stocked on this first island and the Britons were looking for another island and found one close by and they now began to stock it with people and livestock. There were 1000 people on the first island and the fens were beginning to get uneasy for there were more people coming into their territory than they had imagined. Beric and Aska were having trouble keeping their own people in line. At times they would take the fowls or food from the Fen traps. Beric tried to square things by giving the Fens more grain or something each time they brought the matter to him. But it was getting to the point where maybe the Fen men were their biggest problem. After all the Britons were strangers in their land and they should have acted like it.

Then came word that Rome was dissatisfied with the work of their generals in Britain. They promised that new Generals would be sent and if all Britons would return to their homes all would be forgotten. Beric and Boduoc can't quite believe this for even if they returned to their homes still they did not think that the Romans would forget nor the Britons what had been done here at the great Swamp.

Two nights later a man covered with wounds and breathless burst into camp saying: 'The Romans are upon us.' They find that all of their men who were on watch had been cut down, and the Romans in their boats were moving in on them. The main Island encampment was now surrounded by Romans. Thus, the Fen men had surely betrayed them to the Romans. At this time there were over 1000 women and children in this encampment and the men could not just disappear into the swamp. There were only three points on the island where the boats could come up to land. These were manned so they must now fight to the death. Some men were held back for the second wave and the rest were then in their places. After day break the battle began. The Romans attack and attack and made no progress then slowed down a bit and Beric thought that they must be forcing another way in. Then all at once it was found that at three points on the island the Romans were breaking through the brush and bushes. Beric blew his horn and the retreat of some of the forces began. The Britons were at the point of being completely destroyed when the Roman trumpet was sounded. The Roman general announced that Rome honours bravery and if Beric and his men would lay down their arms and surrender their lives would be spared. Beric responded that the Britons scorn the Roman mercy.

Next Beric saw the Romans lay down their weapons and take up long poles and billets of wood. He did not understand what they were doing. But soon came wooden missiles from those long poles and Beric and his men were struck down, and soon bound hand and foot prisoners of the Romans. The men wonder what will be done with them, but Beric thinks that they will be taken to Rome. The long march in captivity then would begin.

As the Britons were marching in their captivity toward the coast they came to the big Roman city which had been partially rebuilt and there the crowd were in awe of these tall men who walked tall, as though not captives. They are taken before the new General sent to conquer Britain. They have a conversation and again the Romans says that if the people will lay down their arms they may return to their homes in peace. There was still an army of Beric's in the Fen and he is sure they will never surrender because of what had happened to their Queen. Beric says that if the Roman General Petronius would take such an oath then he thought that maybe his people would return to their home land and the fugitives who had fled north would return. Petronius says that he had been sent to Britain to bring peace, and on the morning, he knelt at the Altar in their temple and under oath promised that this should be granted. Beric would then send his bracelet to his people and they would understand and go home for the Roman General had come to try to undo what the last two Generals had caused.

Four men then were selected to carry the message back to Beric's people. The next morning they also went to the Temple and all of the Roman Generals and chiefs were assembled. And Petronius laying his hand on the Altar declared thus a solemn Peace with the Britons. And he swore that so long as they remained peaceful subjects of Rome no man would interfere with them. And all would be free Britons to till their land and tend their herds. He said: 'Enough blood has been shed on both sides. It is time for Peace. I sent orders last night to clear the way for the return of your people in Peace.'

Now; Beric and his friend and the rest of the prisoners are on their way to Rome. They cross the channel into Gaulland and they will move on to Rome. They came into the city of Massilia in what is now France. This big city was fascinating to Beric's men for they had seen nothing like it before. There they saw their first Negro. They are told by Beric that they will see many Negroes in Rome, but further south there are lots of them. But here in Rome they are slaves.

Here in the city of Massilia was an old man, a magistrate who wished to speak to Beric. And thus the two men met and visited. Beric told him that the Britons had once come from Gaul. Beric was then taken to meet an Aunt of his escort, for he was informed that Aunt Lesbia had thought that Beric must be a monster. Well, was she surprised. As the two men came into her presence she half rose from her couch under the trees. And two young ladies with her uttered an exclamation of surprise as Beric came near. But the Aunt was almost angry with young Pollis their escort for he had told her he was bringing Beric, this fierce British chief to see her. Her surprise increased as Beric in perfect Latin said: "Pollio did not deceive you, My Lady, My name is Beric I was chief of the Britains." Still she could not believe that this young man was that Beric they had heard was leading the insurgent Britons. Beric assured her that there was no other of his name. He then told her that he had been earlier a captive of the Romans and there had learned their language.

Pollio then completed the introductions to his aunt Lesbia and his cousins Emilia, and Ennia. He also told them that these Britons, big and strong, were sometimes ruled over by their women. Their women take part in their councils and are Queens and Chieftainess, and when necessary they fight as bravely as their men. Their women think of other things than attiring themselves and spending their time in visits and in pleasure.

The girls were not pleased at what Pollio had said, but they decided that if the British women are so tall and strong as Beric then perhaps they are capable of doing as he says. Then turning to Beric they say: 'You do not look fierce Beric,' to which he replied: "I do not think that I am fierce, but even the most peaceful animal will try to defend itself when attacked.'

The next day again Beric and the old philosopher met to talk. Beric told him all he could about the religion of the Britons. He informed Beric that Rome no longer believed in Jupiter and Mars and the rest of the deities, although they still think a state religion is necessary. In Greece among

the upper class scepticism is universal, and this can also be said of the Egyptians. But the Roman religion was borrowed from the Greeks. Turning to Beric the old philosopher said; "Your religion seems to me to be the most reasonable of any I have studied for you believe in ONE God who is invincible, and impersonal, who pervades all nature, but having but having formed so lofty an idea of HIM you still belittle HIM by making HIM a GOD of only your own country." Then going on the old philosopher began to tell Beric of the Jew who he said was similar to the Britons but they accepted not the one called Christ. And now the Jews were trying to set their religion over the land of Judea, however they are putting forth ideas that in time shall cause them much trouble.

Beric then interrupted saying: But Rome attacked our sacred island and they slew the Priest (Druids) on their altars. But this had nothing to do with religion in the mind of the old philosopher. But he also could not agree as to the sacred position between the Druids and the people of Briton. Thus the talking went on between the old philosopher, Norbanus and Beric until the time when dinner was announced and the Old Roman rose. And he thanked Beric for talking to him.

The voyage to Rome then commenced and Beric was informed that his men were to be treated well and they would be taken to a certain place in Rome. Someone seemed to be talking for these men of Briton now going into their captivity. Beric rejoined his companions and he asked Boduoc what he now thinks of Rome. And Boduoc replies that now he sees how mad their enterprise really was. He had not realized just how great Rome had become. The prisoners were then unloaded in the night time, no parade of prisoners was held. They were then marched up to Nero's Palace where the Emperor was seated. The Britons bowed deeply before the Emperor and then stood upright and fearless.

Nero is surprised at the looks of these prisoners and he speaks to Beric and they discuss as to why Britain rebelled. AS this audience closes then Beric tells his men that they are to be sent to the school to be trained as Gladiators. This will take two years so there is time for a change of thought. Nero is hated by many in Rome so they will have to wait and see just what will happen in those two years. Beric's men were then divided, some were in one school and some in others. In fact they were now in three different schools. And then they entered a great hall where there were 40 or 50 men assembled, and they were engaged in gymnastic exercises. They found here that the Gladiators were of many races. There were Gauls, and Goths, and some Iberians, Parthians, and Sythinas together with scores of natives of Italy. Here the Britons would learn of the life of a Gladiator. Some had even survived this life and were now head of these schools which trained men to fight each other for the pleasure of the crowd. But Beric was determined that he would never fight for the pleasure of any crowd. Thus, time would go on for those Britons here in the Gladiator schools.

Then one day Pollio came to see Beric. He says that the old Philosopher and his family are back in Rome. And He talked of these Judeans who were Christians and who did not like many of the things that the Romanos did such as the fights in the Coliseum. But Pollio was to take Beric for a walk through Rome. They met many people and Pollio introduced him as the Briton who was of the Iceni tribe but who had cost Rome a hard years work and some 1500 men before he was captured. Here in Rome the Emperor had given the people corn and entertainment and the people cared for nothing else.

They came to a big building and here was a library and Beric wished to come here to study. This night Beric and Boduoc took a walk. Then they hear a woman cry out and they run to the rescue. They broke up the struggle between two women and several of the scum of the city, only to find that one of the women was the lady Ennia that he had met on his way to Rome.

She and her nurse were on their way to a secret meeting of the Christians held in an underground room of one of the Villas that was near by. Ennia said this was the only place where the WORD was preached, so she had been going with her old nurse. Beric remembering how kind her uncle had been to him then escorted Ennia home, and asked her not to go out at night. But finding out the time she would go to meetings, Beric planned to be in that vicinity for she had said: "Forsake all and follow me" had been her reason for going. He then told Boduoc of this new religion that was springing up in Rome. As the two men went back to their school then Beric remembers that

he had seen a light further away. They went up to the roof and were surprised to find that it was a fire in the city and the wind was spreading it. Beric and his friend then asked for permission to go to help fight the fire. They returned after a night of fighting the fire, and again going up to the roof they were surprised at how much the fire had spread. After a few hours of sleep then Beric and his men went again to help. The fire continued, and was creeping into their part of the city.

The men noted that the police were dealing with those who stole while people were in trouble thus they would not get into that area of trouble. But this fire now was getting close to the home of Norbanus the old philosopher, and the Britons would then go to help move the personal things for this family, up the hill to a relative's garden where they would be protected. The home was emptied of valuables and the servants and Beric and friends had carried all to safety but the last load. Beric and friends then waited for the servants to come back for the last load. They would be thus protected from those who were looters.

The fires continued until more than half of Rome lay in ashes. Of the 14 districts of the city, three were completely destroyed and seven more were much damaged. The Britons had moved out to the hills and it was a much better place than in that old city. Then came a message from his old friend the philosopher that Enna had been arrested at one of the Christian secret meetings. Beric was angry with them at first then he thought this is some religion that can cause people to be so taken with it and so determined after they adopted it. He then decided that he also must look into this strange religion.

The next message came saying that Ennia had been condemned and was to be handed to the lions the next day in the arena. Her family were ordered to be there also because they had not controlled their child. Beric also made arrangements with his teacher to be at the arena that day also. As he stands at the opening to the arena, he watches the Gladiators fight and the Briton won. Then a hush falls over the crowd. An old man and two sons about 17 or 18 years of age are brought into the arena. The prisoners are offered their lives if they will pay homage to a small state of the Goddess Diana that is held by the Priest. All refuse and they are then led back to the centre of the arena and the old gentleman begins to sing and his boys then joined in.

The entrance to one of the cages at the other end of the arena was opened and out comes a lion and a lioness. They make a trip around the arena and then finally pay attention to the figures in the centre, and then they crouch and begin to crawl toward the motionless figures. Beric turned his head. He did not need to watch for he knew what was to happen.

Finally the lions were driven back to their cages and then four different batches of prisoners were brought out and all was the same as before.

Then came a pause, a girl of a noble family was supposed to be the last. Norbanus sat in the front with Nero. Again the doors were opened and a priest of Diana entered with white robed attendants, and six virgins, followed by Ennia. Even the most hardened hearts of the spectators were moved as they saw this young girl so beautiful, dressed all in white, advancing calmly between her guards. When the procession formed up before the emperor, she even saluted him. The Priest and the virgins then urged her to pay reverence to the statue of Diana. Her parents implored her to recant for their sake, but with tears running down her cheeks she shook her head. Turning to the Emperor, she said: "I can't deny the LORD who died for me." Then Nero rose from his seat saying: "For the sake of those who love you recant." But she replied: "I cannot HE gave his life for me, it is not much that I should give mine for HIM." Nero sank back in his seat then gave a wave of his hand and the door of another cage was opened, and a lion much larger than before entered the arena giving a deep roar to salute the audience. As this happened a tall figure, naked to the waist, sprang into the arena. He carried only a short sword that he has snatched from one of the attendants watching behind the barricade. A deep murmur of surprise came from the audience. After consulting with the Emperor then the guard came out and drove the lion back into its cage. Beric who had been standing in front of Ennia advanced toward the Emperor who asked: "Who are you?" And received this reply: "I am Beric once chief of the Iceni, now a British captive. I received great kindness on my way here from Norbanus the father of this girl. I am

ready to defend her to the death. I ask, oh Emperor, that you allow me to defend her with such arms as you decide that I may have.'

'Are you a Christian?' The Emperor asked. To which Beric replied: 'I am not. I am of the religion of my nations that worships as their own fashion declares.' Then Nero nodded and Beric replied: 'Thanks. I accept the conditions. Should the gods of my country and of this nation defend me against the lion, then I ask that the damsel shall be freed from all penalties and restored to her family.' Nero nodded and said: 'That is understood.'

Beric returned to his former position and asked for his cloak. Then reaching the position in front of the girl he threw off his cloak so everyone could see that he was unarmed. Then he tore off the broad bands from the edge of his cloak and twisted them into ropes forming a noose in each. Threw the cloak over his arm and signed to the attendants to open the cage door.

A roar of approval rose from the crowd. The lion came out with a great jump and then crouched and began to crawl toward the man with its tail twitching. And then it sprang through the air. As it did Beric stepped aside and then sprang across its loins at the same time wrapping his cloak in many folds around its head and knotting the ends tight. The lion sprang to its feet with a roar of surprise and disgust. It tried to tear at the strange substance which enveloped its head. Beric dropped the end of a noose over one of its forepaws, drew it tight and with a sudden jerk pulled the lion over on its back. As it sprang up again, the other paw was noosed and again it was thrown over. It sprang up again and Beric struck it a tremendous blow on the nose. This brought it down one more time. Then it sprang up again leaping around trying to get at its tormentor. But Beric easily kept out of the way. He then struck it again three or four times on the ear which sent it rolling over and over.

It seemed almost stunned and lay there a moment. Finally the lion regained its strength and as it sprang up then Beric was once upon it and seizing the ropes he quickly twisted them behind the lions back and fastened them together. The lion was now helpless. As the lion rolled over and over Beric snatched the cloak and from it tore off two more strips and without difficulty bound the hind feet. Then he again wrapped the cloak around the lions head and then standing up bowed to the crowd. He had one cut which was bleeding badly, that was all. He turned to the girl who had her eyes shut deep in prayer. He picked her up and delivered her to her mother. Then bowing to the Emperor, he went back to his trainer who would take care of his wound.

As Beric left the arena after once more bowing to the crowd and accepting their gifts that they were throwing into the arena, he was told that when his wound was tended he was to come to the Emperors palace. His trainer thinks that this means that no longer would Beric have to fight in the arena. Norbanus came to thank Beric and he said that he thought that there must be something to this Christian religion for even the young were ready to die for it.

Beric then became the chief librarian for the Emperor even tho he did not desire the post. Then the next day he went to see Ennia but he is too late, for she had died that morning. She was in a coma as he had carried her to her family and she never regained consciousness. But her father was still grateful to Beric for he did not have to see her torn to pieces by the lion. Surely her God had given her courage to stand for him even knowing what the lion would do.

Emilia the sister talked to Beric and tells him that Ennia had told her that Beric knew that she had joined the Christians. Beric thinks that there must be something special about this Christian religion that seems almost strange. For it could call to a quiet, gentle girl and she would go out at night unbeknown to her parents to learn more about it. Her GOD must surely have given her the strength and the courage that she showed when she chose death by the lions rather than to deny HIM.

Emilia expressed her desire to learn more about this religion even tho she thought it must be bad to encourage a young girl to deceive her parents. Ennia's mother was horrified, when she learned that her daughter was a Christian. She was also almost relieved when she learned that she was dead. But Emilia was also happy that her sister had not died in the arena from the lions attack. Beric tells her of his new job as librarian. But she warns that he must be careful for Nero is not to be trusted. But if at any time that Beric needed protection then to come to her for she had

many relatives and friends here in Rome. Just remember that Nero will kill you to for he kills all those he once favours.

Beric promises to be careful and he went back to the Palace, and asked for Phaon who then took Beric to his chambers. This apartment was charming. There were no windows but the light entered from the opening in the ceiling and there was a shallow basin to catch the rain fall that would come through the opening in the roof. There were several carved couches in the room and statues and pots of tall aquatic plants stood in the basin. And there were heavy hanging covering for all of the openings. Phaon pulled aside one of these and said that here was Beric's sleeping quarters, and there was another beside this one. But Phaon suggested that Beric not have any guest for Nero would be uneasy if he knew that strangers were to close to his apartment.

Then he showed Beric another room and as he drew back the covering then this was the library. And here seated at a table was the Greek Chiton and he saluted Beric. Well, Beric is hoping that he can be good friends for this would be the one to help him understand the Greek. Phaon then shows Beric the passage that leads to Nero's private apartment. Beric was then informed that Nero's bell will be the signal that the Emperor requires him. There will be three rings, and if after those three rings there is another sharply struck then Beric is to grab his sword and rush to the side of the Emperor. AS they returned to his quarters then Beric inquired as to what his duties were, for Chiton is better able to discharge those of the librarian.

Thus Beric is told that he can sit here and read, or pass the time as he likes until nine o'clock. Then Nero goes to the baths and after he will go out to inspect the works or to take part in a public ceremony. At three then he sups and this meal lasts until seven or eight o'clock sometimes until midnight. But Beric's duties end as Nero goes out to the Baths. After that Beric can do as he pleases until The Emperor is back in the palace. At night Beric is told that he should draw back the curtains between the passage way and his room. Lay down with his sword at his side so that he could hear Nero's summons and even his voice if raised loudly. Beric's duties thus began at 6:00 in the morning and between that hour and nine o'clock he should be in the Library. This should be no problem for Beric as to Chiton he only had to be there when Nero as in the palace, so that he could produce any book that Nero might call for. His meals were also brought to him from the imperial kitchen.

At this time a slave drew apart the hangings and said that Nero now expected Beric. As Beric emerged, he found Nero standing at the steps leading to the garden. He asked Beric to walk with him for he wanted to hear of Britain, the land that Beric claimed as his. Thou Beric complied and he talked of his mother, and of the land around their old home, about the problem with the wolves, and about his companion Bodouc and their many hunting trips into the forest. Nero then ask of his time when he as a young boy had been a captive among them of life in the Roman City of Camalodunum. What a strange mixture said Nero, the cultivated Roman and the wild Britain. Now I understand better your risking your life for the Christian girl in the arena. Do you love her? No, replied Beric. We Britons do not think of marriage until we are about 25 years of age. Ennia was little more than a child according to our customs. But I think that I would have done the same thing even if I had not seen her before. Few of my people would hesitate to risk their lives to save a helpless woman.

Nero then replied: 'I think that we are all for self here in Rome. Although we can admire someone like you. The reason why I like you, Beric, is because you are so different from me or those around me. We are a product of Rome, while you are a product of the forest. Every man here lives for wealth and pleasure. And we suffer none to stand in our way. This is not the only girl that you have saved Beric for word was received some month ago from Caius Muro saying that word had come to him while in Syria that Beric the young chief of the Iceni had saved his little daughter when Camaloduium had been sacked. And had then sent her safely and unharmed back to the Romans. HE wrote requesting that I make your life as well as possible. Is there anything else that you could wish for? If so, speak freely.

Beric then asked for his friend Boduoc who has always been at his side. This air in the Palace is heavy and thinking that I might not hear your call, if I had my friend Boduoc with me we could take turns watching through the night and the slightest sound would reach our ears. I might even

go further. There are 20 of my countrymen that were brought here with me. All are picked men, I would have you place them here as door keepers or labourers under your gardeners then at all times you would have 20 men around you. Twenty men who would obey my orders. I can answer for their fidelity, and they will follow me until their death.

Nero instantly thought this an excellent idea and promised to give the orders immediately, and the following day the British captives were all disposed as doorkeepers in the Palace. Beric was present when the men assembled and he informed them that they only had to see that no strangers passed them. Each would have one attendant who would take the names of those wanting to enter. They were to be on duty for six hours each and then to remember to be in the palace in the evening by nine o'clock. You will all be in an apartment together, and if you receive a message from me then come prepared for fighting. Do not mingle with the Romans on duty and do not listen to tales relating to the Emperor. Everything that is done in this palace is known. If you are seen talking to someone, who would fall under suspicion it might cost your life. Perhaps if we serve well then Nero might allow us to go home.

Thus, life began for the Britons here in Nero's palace in Rome. Six months then passed and Beric stood high in the Palace. Three or four-times Nero had tested his bell and on each an armed guard had entered his room only to retire when he had waved his hand.

Beric often followed the train of the Emperor when he went abroad. He became well known and in time he would be offered bribes. When he visited the home of Norbanus he found that the old philosopher was still interested in nothing else while his wife was becoming interested in the politics of the hour and the society that swirled around the Emperor even tho they did not like him.

At times Nero would ask for the opinion of Beric on some subject of state but Beric would say he knew nothing of such things, but if Nero would allow him to speak of something else, that was the fact that he thought that this persecution of the Christians was terrible. He did not think that the Christians were any danger to Nero as did many of those who sought Nero's favor and edged him on.

As time went on Nero's confidence in the Britains increased. Lesbia the wife of Norbanus was busy accepting the invitation of the Emperor. One day as Beric came to visit, he found his old friend deeply troubled. It seemed that Lesbia had decided to marry her only daughter to Rufinus a Roman at the court. This man Beric knew and he was also troubled for he loved Emilia. But of course now he could not speak for her hand in marriage for after all he was a prisoner. But he did tell his old friend of this love.

The two men decided that Beric should be betrothed to Emilia and this would help her escape from the marriage that her mother was planning. Thus the old philosopher called to his daughter and when she came he told her that he had betrothed her to Beric if she would agree. Emilia flushed with a sudden glow of colour. Beric then interrupted telling her that she should know before she agree that he could not as of now marry her and he could also not offer her a life of luxury that she had here. But Emilia says that she loves Beric and would rather live in a cottage with him than any other place. Beric then drew her to him and gave her a kiss, and said: In Briton the husband is not Lord of his wife, they are friends and equal, and such will we be.

Thus, it would only be a betrothal at first. But Norbanus would now get the necessary papers ready to be signed and not let his wife know what they were planning. He sent the two young people out into the garden while he made plans for witnesses and drew up the necessary papers. Then later the young folks were called back to the study and Norbanus and Beric signed the necessary papers and so did those who witnessed. Then Lesbia burst into the house. She was very vocal as to what she saw going on for she was marrying her daughter to the roman and then she would live at court.

Norbanus then quietly approached her and informed her that she could do nothing now as Emilia was betrothed to Beric. When she kept on raving and threatening then Norbanus told her to leave and he would send after her all of her property. Lesbia stepped back as though struck but her pride came to her rescue and she said: 'Thanks for the release.' and then she stormed out of the

house. Beric then promised to explain to Nero for he was said to side with the wives when they had trouble with their husbands.

Beric and Emilia then talk as to where she can live so as to be safe, and she asks him if he would mind if she went into the Catacombs with the Christians. She says that although her old nurse had been captured at the time of Ennia and put to death, still the nurse had a daughter and she was married to a freedman. She had met him many times and they had offered her security in the Catacombs where they lived. Emilia knew where to go and what door to knock on and then knock twice, and when the door was opened, she was to say: "In the name of Christ" and they would bring her to this family. For there is an entrance to the catacombs under this very house where she was to knock on the door.

Beric shows Emilia a ring Nero had given him. It is a figure of Mercury carved on an Amethyst. When you receive it then wrap yourself in a somber mantle like a slave and go to this refuge after telling your father where you are going. Then he may also flee if he chooses. The money that was given to Beric gotten from the jewellery thrown into the arena was to be given to Emilia and she would then ask her friends in the Catacombs to hide it for her. Beric himself was well paid by Nero. Some of that money he had already placed in several hands and some sent out of the country.

Then Emilia asks this question of Beric. Should she after she joined the Christians listen to them for she might fall for their religion. Beric assures her that she should do as she thought best, for he himself had thought of learning of the Christian faith. Emilia was to ask them as a last resort, could he also take refuge among them.

Beric returns to the Palace and when the time came he told Nero of his betrothal but assured him this marriage was out of the question for now. And the marriage would be out of the question as long as Nero had need of him. This seemed to satisfy the Emperor and the subject was dropped.

Later the subject came up again and Beric was asked to bring his betrothed to one of the entertainments. Nero said that he had heard that she was very beautiful. To Beric this sounds like trouble. He informs Nero that they were not married at this time so that would not be proper. But the Emperor suggests that will make no difference. He also suggested that he knew the mother of Beric's coming bride. As Beric informs him that she and her husband had separated the Emperor suggests, she will soon be comforted. Beric knew that Rufinus would not let the matter drop and he was worried.

A week later Boduoc was on guard at ten in the evening when he heard sounds of laughing and revelry from the banquet hall. Boduoc came to Beric and told him that Beric was wanted in the Banquet room. This meant mischief to Beric and he gave his ring to Philo to take to the Lady Emilia and to also tell the Britons to come immediately to his room. When you find the Lady Emilia, tell her THE TIME HAS COME. Beric then went to the Banquet room and he found the Emperor drunk with wine. Nero then ordered Beric to bring this girl whom all said was so beautiful, she shall be a worthy queen of our revelry. Beric informs the Emperor that he will not do this. Rufinus who was lying on a couch next to the Emperor laughed. Then Nero rose unsteadily to his feet and demanded to know if Beric had refused his request. And Beric tells him that this was not a lawful command and he thus refused to obey it. 'THEN BY THE GODS YOUR LIFE IS FORFEITED,' was the reply from the Emperor. Beric replied: You may thank your gods, Nero, that I have more honor than you. Were it otherwise I would strike you down. But a British chieftain disdains to fight another unarmed foe.' Then Beric lifted his voice and said: " Run, Philo, Run."

Rufinus drew his sword and lunged at Beric and as he came the side stepping Eric picked him up and threw him down by a large column. The Emperor then shouts for his guards, but also Boduoc and his friends were now at the side of Beric. The battle was hot and heavy and then more of the Britons came into the fray and finally Beric called for a retreat. They ran down passages ways and down the staircase to the Garden. They ran until they reached the door in the wall. Beric had the key which he had obtained from the Gardener some time before. AS they passed through the gate Beric told them to make their way down the road leading to the Alban

hills. Go singularly and quietly and when outside the city they would meet again. Boduoc seemed to be enjoying this very much.

Beric and Boduoc went to the home of Scopus the head of the school where Beric had first trained. Scopus was himself once a Prisoner and he asked Beric if he wants some of his scholars to join him. But Beric thinks not, but he would like to have one named Porus, for that one so wanted to be free. The men meet outside the city and they headed for the mountains. Finally they found a farmer and purchased a sheep and some flour and then went back into the forest further on before they lighted a fire and fed their hunger. Then they climbed higher before laying down to sleep for a few hours. They were getting well into the mountains when a figure appeared on a crag above them asking: "who are you?"

Beric announced that they were fugitives, and finally 15 men appeared and came down into the Ravine. These were also escapees from the schools of the gladiators, and they knew of Beric. Especially their leader who was Gatho. It was then decided that they would join forces with Beric and his friends. Beric thus carried money to purchase supplies for them and this should help avoid trouble ahead. These new men had a headquarters some distance ahead and they headed for it. At the camp they feasted and then decided that Beric should take command of their company, for he knew Roman ways the best.

Porus was sent out to see what he could learn, and he was soon back to report that a large group of men had halted where they bought the flour and the sheep. At least 100 heavily armed troops and 100 archers were thus on their trail. Thus they broke up camp, called in the men and started to meet Gatho's group who were making their way down from a point higher up. Three of the men who were most fleet of foot were picked to stay behind and watch the progress of the army that was coming behind them. The rest of the men proceeded on their way. Late that night one of those who was left behind came into their camp. He reported that the Romans seemed to be in earnest, for they were pushing hard. Beric roused the resting men and they then climbed higher up the mountain. At daybreak they rested after posting sentinels. They gathered fugitives as they went until finally Beric again divided the troop. He wanted no more than 100 men under his command.

So far they had retreated without fighting, and Rome could not complain for they were only fugitives, not resurrectionist. But some time they would have to face the Romans thus here in the high mountains they would need a permanent camp and some huts and other things, but there should be no more than 100 men in their camp. More would be dangerous to try to control. They found a hide out and one man Porus was selected to find a farmer further down the mountain who would help them get supplies and he took three men and set out on the mission and soon they were well supplied.

Then Beric thought that he should tell some of those in Rome who were holding his money for him that he might soon be needing it. He had enough to last for a year but he thought that those holding his funds should be notified that he was alive. Philo then decided that he was the one to go for he looked more like a Roman. He was also to go to the Catacombs and get in touch with Emilia. Philo tried to inform Beric not to worry for he knew that he could do this. But what worried him was what if the Lady Emilia insisted that she come with him. This troubled Beric for this camp was no place for a lady. Philo was to find out if Norbanus was alive, and if he was then he would know of Emilia, as to whether she was safe with the Christians. Beric knows that he will not desert his comrades but they must all escape together. But he would now have to depend on Porus and Philo to find out what was going on in Rome and find a way to bring Emilia out of the Catacombs.

Porus and Philo set out together and weeks passed then one morning Philo entered the camp saying: All went well, the Lady Emilia is now at the home of the farmer Cornelius. She sent no letter for there was no writing paper in the home. Beric then left at once accompanied by Philo. He learned that Norbaanus had committed suicide the night that Beric left.

Nero had then seized all of his property and thus there were no friends for Emilia left in Rome. And Emilia insisted that she come to Beric. He also told Beric that there was much unrest in

Rome. People were hoping to overthrow the Emperor who was planning a big expedition into the mountains to root out those who had gathered in the mountains.

He also learned that this gathering of troops for the mountain strike would be commanded by Caius Muro who had returned from Syria and had rejoined the Lady Berenice. This pleased Beric for these men were his old friends. The farm house to which they were heading was near the Straits of Messina and as they reached the brow of the hill overlooking the Straits then Beric moving by leaps and bounds out ran Philo as he saw Porus standing at the door of the farmhouse. A moment later Emilia was in his arms.

It was decided that Emilia could not go to the mountain camp. But tomorrow they would be married, after Beric's friend Boduoc could come to be with him. Emilia informed Beric that she had become a Christian. Beric said that did not matter to him for some day she could teach him, for he felt that there was something about this religion that taught men to die.

The room of Lady Emilia was then covered with the rich hangings the men had purchased. The next morning the farmer and his wife were called in and in their presence and that of his three followers then Beric performed the simple Roman ceremony of taking Emilia's hand in his and announcing that he was taking her for his wife. Beric remained three days at the cottage and then rejoined his band in the mountains.

A few days later a messenger came with the news that Rome was sending a large body of troops to make a great expedition through out the mountains to entirely exterminate the outlaws. This would have not happened if these others of the mountains had not plundered for food and so forth but had they paid for it. Of course they had no money to do this as did. Beric's group. Beric then went to meet with all those living in the mountains round about, and finally 800 men were gathered at the bay of Tarentum where it was decided that the Roman force should land.

Beric then laid out the plan he thought that the Romans were planning by which these mountain men would be facing and these leaders then saw the trap the Romans were planning so as to drive them into. Plans then were made and the men wished Beric to be their leader. And he accepted with the assurance that his lead must be obeyed. He had only accepted this leadership for he had fought the Romans before and sometimes had been successful. Thus Beric gave orders and these men prepared to fight the Romans. Beric visited the farmhouse and Emilia often and then a messenger came saying that a great fleet had arrived at the mouth of the Crather river. Then men had now practiced archery and had other weapons with which to fight. They had done work at the passes through which the Romans would have to move and they thought that they were ready.

One morning then the Romans were seen to issue from Cosenza and move up the road that crossed the mountains. Once on the crest they paused to build a permanent camp. As they moved out from that camp then at each valley and ravine, they were met with huge rocks being rolled down upon them, and a hail of arrows would suddenly come from the forest. Thus, the Romans were being harassed night and day. The men would let the Romans advance for a day and they would do this uneasily. They were then carrying rations for three days.

At the time when the food train was to arrive then Beric and his men were ready. They take the food train and took all of the food and killed the men and animals so no one could go forward to tell the Romans what had happened. When the food did not arrive then the Roman general sent back a strong force with torches to find why the food train did not come, and they found what had happened and returned, to the main camp.

It was decided that this looked like the work of Beric for surely he had escaped. Thus the war went on and the Roman soldiers were being worn down and they were not making any progress. The report to Rome said that they were fighting an enemy who did not allow them to strike him. They had lost 3000 men and the opinion of the General in command was that they should retire from the mountains and establish troops near the foot of the mountains. When hunger then drove the people out then they could fall on them, surely their will be traitors among them and we will take them eventually. Muro's advice was taken and the troops were seen descending from the mountains to the plains below.

The Lady Berenice then came to live by the sea with her father. And she talks to him about Beric her childhood playmate. She had made some inquiries in Rome and had found the truth as to what had happened, and that Beric was betrothed to Caius cousin the Lady Emilia. Nero he learned had ordered Beric to bring her to an orgy and Beric had refused, he had killed Rufinus and then the Britons had that very night escaped into the mountain.

Caius replied that it was a strange thing for this young Briton was so mixed up in their lives. First, Caius said he owed his life to this young man. And then he owes him for the work he did for Ennia in the arena even though she died anyway. And now here the Romans had put 20,000 men against Beric with his only 1000 men and then Beric had bested them once more.

As the General came into the house he looked troubled and Berenice then ask him what was wrong. He said that a man had arrived to talk to him. This man lived high in the mountains and for a year he said he had been selling food to the bandits He acknowledged that he had been well paid but for a larger price he would lead the Romans to the camp of the Bandits. The chief of their group was named Beric and four of his men are there with him and they are of his own race.

Thus, finally treachery was afoot. Surely Berenice would not let her father take advantage of this treachery. But being a Roman commander this would be necessary for him to do. Berenice turned to her husband Pollio and he could but answer otherwise for he was also a Roman soldier. Thus Berenice asks for permission to act as she sees fit. But her husband also warned her that if she should warn Beric and his men then she would then be forfeiting both their lives.

Berenice throws her arms around her husband and said: "You shall know nothing, but I will save Beric." The following day Beric and Emilia were sitting on the veranda of the farmers home and they saw some distance away two figures coming up the mountain. The girl carried a basket and as they watched then Emilia said: She is a good-looking girl. They then came closer and instead of going to the entrance of the house the girl then walked across the veranda saying to Emilia: "I shall tell your fortune."

Emilia replied it has already been told, I am to be a farmers wife. The girl then said: 'I can see an amphitheatre and it is crowded with people. In the front row sits a man past middle age and a lady and a girl. In the centre of the arena is a young girl dressed all in white.

"HUSH. HUSH." Said Emilia. your know me, but how I cannot imagine how"

The girl continues: 'I see another scene. There is a hut, and there is an old woman who does not speak. She seems to be of the same race. The other two are Romans. The mat at the door is pushed aside and there enters a tall youth.' Beric had risen to his feet to exclaim: 'Is it possible that the boy grew into a man and the girl grew into a woman?'

"It is Berenice," he exclaimed. And you should know that Emilia is the daughter of Norbanus and he is the uncle of my husband Pollio, replied the girl.

Then the girl said: Do you know who is standing there, and she pointed to her companion? Beric then says, surely it is my tutor and friend Nepo and then runs to embrace him.

As Berenice tells them as to how they have been betrayed and how the capture is planned, then she and her escort leave and Beric summons his man to tell him that they have been betrayed. Thus, he must now take Emilia with him into the mountains.

Life went on in the mountain camp and Emilia seemed to enjoy it. Then one morning Bodouc came with the news that there were two columns of smoke rising from the hill over Ehegium. This was the signal for Beric to come back to the area of the farm where they had stayed. Beric thus heads for the farm, and here he meets with Pollio, the husband of Berenice. And the news is that Nero is dead. He died of his own hand. The senate had declared Galba as Emperor. The Romans were no longer interested in a group of men in the hills. Just treat the people fairly and Rome will not be interested.

Three months passed and again there is a smoke signal and Beric now takes Emilia with him to the area of the farm house. There he is told that Caius Muro wanted to see him in the city below them. Beric is glad to go and they descend the mountain and were passed quickly into the Generals quarters. The General advance to them and shook hands with Beric and then turned to greet

Emilia. He had good news for Beric for he had been able to inform Galba of the whole story and had thus arranged freedom for Beric and his men. They were to go back to Britain and more than this Beric has been appointed provincial governor of all Britain lying north of the Thames river. He is answerable to only the proprietor himself. He had also been provided a ship for their transport home.

The ship was making her way up the straits of Messina and on to Massilia. Beric had brought many of the Gauls with him, and he now gave them money to use on their journeys home.

There were lots of officials here in Massilia who had known Emilia and her sister and father. Emilia now could travel in a carriage, and the two slave with her had been given their freedom. Beric and company then went on to Britain and he proceeded to the seat of his new position as governor. Great was the welcome for Beric and his wife. Beric appointed Boduoc to an important post under him to act for him during his absences which were frequent as he travelled to put his jurisdiction in place. Then word came that Galba was no longer Emperor of Rome and now it was Otho, and he would be followed by Vespasian who would be a just and severe Emperor.

Now; that the tribal wars were over then attention turned to farming and from tribes of fierce warriors the Britons had become settled and semi Civilized people. Soon a colony of Christians came to Norwich and settled under the protection of Emilia. They brought with them an eloquent priest and soon the Christian religion was spreading rapidly and Beric himself then openly accepted the Christian faith. Porus was not long in finding a British wife and Philo embraced Christianity, and even became a priest of that church.

A year after Beric came to Britain he and Emilia were delighted by the arrival of Pollio and Berenice and also Caius Muro, who had received a civil appointment in Britain. So he was placed in control of the collection of taxes.

Finally full of years and rich in the affection of his countrymen, Beric the Briton died and his son succeeded him as governor, and for many generations the eastern division of this island was governed by the descendants of **BERIC THE BRITON**.



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