



Rome's Fallen Eagle

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Caligula has been assassinated and the Praetorian Guard have proclaimed Claudius Emperor - but his position is precarious.

His three freedmen, Narcissus, Pallas and Callistus, must find a way to manufacture a quick victory for Claudius - but how?

Pallas has the answer: retrieve the Eagle of the Seventeenth, lost in Germania nearly 40 years before. Who but Vespasian could lead a dangerous mission into the gloomy forests of Germania?

Accompanied by a small band of cavalry, Vespasian and his brother try to pick up the trail of the Eagle. But they are tailed by hunters who pick off men each night and leave the corpses in their path. Someone is determined to sabotage Vespasian's mission.

In search of the Eagle and the truth, pursued by barbarians, Vespasian will battle his way to the shores of Britannia. Yet can he escape his own Emperor's wrath?

Rome's Fallen Eagle Details

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From Reader Review Rome's Fallen Eagle for online ebook

Speech says

What a relief to be done with Caligula! Not just for Vespasian and the rest of the Roman population of AD41, but also for us in 2015 reading Robert Fabbri's excellent books. In the nicest possible sense, it is good that Caligula has met his just desserts. He cast a terrible, malignant shadow over the previous book, 'False God of Rome.' His unpredictability and not all that slow descent into madness, was fantastic writing from Robert Fabbri, but hard to stomach sometimes. That made it's impression (rightly so) even more forceful, I felt.

Anyway, Caligula is stabbed in the vitals on the way home from yet another debauched theatre visit. By a hooded man. However, despite having done just about everyone, apart from Caligula's wife, a tremendous favour, the Roman bunting is a little slow to be put out. This is due to the only alternative to Caligula as Emperor is Claudius (CLAVDIVS to give him his proper Shenley Court Comprehensive school-watching the Derek Jakobi TV version 'I Claudius'-name). 'What's wrong with that?' you who haven't read the story so far, or skipped your school History lessons, might cry: Well, to bring you up to speed, the only problem with that, with Claudius is, he a drooling, stammering, half-idiot. Perfect as a politician then. Well, he is the only game in town - for now - that most can agree on. The best least worst solution to the succession. However, he is surrounded by powerful men. Both physically, in the shape of the feared Prætorian guard, and with Narcissus, Pallas and Callistus, three of the schemingest schemers it will ever be the Romans' misfortune - but our good fortune - to come up against. Each is seemingly trying to out-do the other in proving their loyalty to Clavdivs by proving to the Roman people, the mob, that Clavdivs is a worthy Emperor. And what better way to do that than have the Roman army go off in search of a stolen Legion Eagle in Germania. Not just any stolen Eagle, but the one that was lost at the scene of possibly Rome's greatest - as in worst - defeat. The catastrophic, humiliating defeat 40 years previously in the Germanian Teutoburg forests. Capturing and returning the Eagle would go a long way to restoring Roman pride and ensuring Clavdivs' popularity. Not to mention subduing the troublesome Germanians and setting the Empire nicely up for another round of expansion, where Clavdivs can prove his worth by out-doing even the great Julius Caesar - not to mention Caligula - and conquering Britannia.

Luckily for Robert Fabbri and us, it is Vespasian who is sent off on what most believe is an impossible mission that even Ethan Hunt would think twice about. That of finding and bringing the Eagle back. I can't now remember whether that is fiction Robert F has put in, or actual fact, based on likelihood, but either way, it works. And how! As we - Vespasian and us - escape from Rome's clutches, the story and the writing blossom, flow and soar. If something can blossom and soar at the same time. Incredible stuff. So exciting, compulsive and compelling. I hate cliché's to do with book reading - you try 'devouring' a book one day - but I really did not want to put the book down. Even to have my tea. Or my breakfast. And I'll be sending the marriage guidance counselling bill direct to Mr Fabbri. It engages immediately and never lets go - not until the end anyway. The story, the character, the author have really been set free by coming out from the stifling confines of the Caligula period. The hunt for the Eagle's residing place in the threatening, mysterious forests of Germania, is done a little like 'Southern Comfort,' if you've ever seen that film, mixed with 'Predator.' Remember what happened in those two and you'll get what's going on here. It really is done so well, the sense of threat is palpable. Superb writing! Very filmic, which may or may not be a coincidence...

I'm going to go on a limb and say it's one of the two best books I've read this year. The other being Greg Iles' 'The Bone Tree.' For sure in the best three anyway. Certainly the best Roman-period book I can remember ever reading. It really reads like a modern-day thriller, set in AD 41. Robertus Ludlumus. And it's the fourth in the series, how can THAT be? Shouldn't people be running on auto-pilot at this point? Not Mr F. If you like your action fast and your Romans and Barbarians furious, then pick up Rome's Fallen Eagle

now! Go on, do it! (You see what I did there?).

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Krystina says

I'll be the first to admit that I ended up not reading Part II of this book. I give the author credit at his evident skill in writing battle scenes, but they've become pretty perfunctory at this point. We all know that Vespasian dies at home in the imperial palace in 79 A.D., so there really isn't any urgency to the battles. On the flipside (while I continue to object to the characterization of Vespasian's relationships with his wife and his mistress), the intrigue in Ancient Rome in this book were some of the series' best.

John says

Enthralling read

This has thus far been the best of the set in my opinion. The adventures of Vespasian is captivating and description of life in that period is quite interesting. Its an enthralling read.

Robin Carter says

Review

For those that have not heard of them, there is a group called the HWA "Historical Writers Association" . It is made up of many of the finest writers in the Historical Fiction genre. Robert Fabbri is one of these splendid authors.

For the last 12 months I have been convinced that this group of authors is having an impact on its self, a positive impact. I don't think its an overt impact, I just think that personalities, the discussions, the exchange of thoughts and ideas is impacting the styles, the depth, the quality and the final product. To the point that 2013 has led to some of the finest books ever released in the genre.

Robert Fabbri's Vespasian 4 Rome's Fallen Eagle is for me an example of that, easily the finest book in the series, a book that has taken another step up in quality of action, imagery, pace, prose and plotting. I was left mesmerised for hours at a time reading this book, I grimaced in pain, laughed out loud and cheered on Vespasian and his brother Sabinus with every page.

From the forests of Teutoberg and a story that should have screamed implausible, but had me on the edge of my seat, to the seat of imperial power and Narcissus, to the battle fields of Britain. This book packs in so much story line, and yet covers everything in such great depth and power i'm amazed the book isn't over 1000 pages long, it seemed to go on for ever and yet finished far too quickly.

This is truly one of the best novels you will read this year, and for fans of Simon Scarrow: the ending left me feeling I had been dropped at the start of Under the Eagle, I wonder how many people will be pulling out

their copies for a re-read after finishing this book.

Very highly recommended, and i'm so looking forward to book 5

(Parm)

Vespasian

1. Tribune of Rome (2011)
 2. Rome's Executioner (2012)
 3. False God of Rome (2013)
 4. Rome's Fallen Eagle (2013)
- The Crossroads Brotherhood (2011)
The Racing Factions (2013)
-

Martin says

Book #4 and like the previous three I just love being taken back to Imperial Rome ! One is either into this period or they ain't !! Fabbri writes well enough to make the tales an exciting ride !

mixa1 says

Quite a nice read and I will definitely continue to follow up with this series. What I am starting to like a bit less is the fact that Vespasian always seems to be in the middle of the action - even when it is obviously unnecessary - which is a bit implausible for a legatus. Especially since the book likes to make the impression that it was normal. The book includes some engaging moments, but it cannot compare to the many other books describing the invasion of Britain. The three stars might be a result of my disappointment by the way it was described because I was looking forward to this particular part of the story. I have read about it from couple of perspectives, but never from the Vespasian's one. I think Fabbri should have taken more care while writing the part, because there are just so many books describing it and readers are likely to be familiar with these other perspectives. I hope the next instalment is going to be more in line with the previous books.

3.4 stars

Kate says

I've enjoyed this whole Vespasian series but without doubt Rome's Fallen Eagle is the best and that is no mean feat. The hunt for lost Roman eagles in the forests of Germania, the invasion of Britannia - both events are brilliantly brought to life in a novel packed full of action, intrigue and battle and peopled by a plethora of memorable characters, both Roman and 'barbarian'. I could not put this down. Excellent!

Rod says

It is no wonder each of these books gets a higher rating than the one before. How does Fabbri keep up the intensity, story line and intrigue? The characters are so well developed. Each has such an important role in every turn of the page!

The amount of adventure, blood and gore, twists and turns to the story, simply keep you breathless and unable to put it down! Vespasian is the central character, and yet he has so many alongside him who value add to him! Magnus is fabulous, a man worthy of admiration...and a little fear if you fell foul of him! The fat Gaius is fun and a little eccentric! Caenis is in and out of the story, but is a strong female presence of great depth. Great stuff Robert...keep writing mate!

Nathan Stevens says

Loved getting more into the history and politics of 1st Century Rome following Vespasian, his brother and their legions. The conquering of Britain is the second half of the book which I enjoyed more - some good fight scenes and it was interesting to find out more about what Britons were up to at that point in history

Beorn says

This is a slightly disappointing book for me as it's a tale of two parts - less two halves, more 70:30.

The title is remarkably misleading as the part of the story dealing with the recovery of the XVII Legion's Eagle standard, lost during the disaster in the Teutoberg Forest, only takes up around the first third of the book. The rest, especially the second half, is much more concerned with the invasion & conquest of Britannia; of which Vespasian was historically a part of.

What disappoints me about the book is that the early chapters vividly elucidates just how internecine, backstabbing and rife with hubris Roman politics. The notable quality of the writing continues through the quest of Vespasian, and his brother Sabinus, into the dark wilds of Germania Magna on the search for the son of legendary figure & the Benedict Arnold of his day, Arminius aka Erminaz.

It's after this point, when the action switches to the build up to and invasion of Britain that the zeal with which I devoured the book tapered off as it felt like more of a plateau in terms of the immersiveness. The narrative appeared to take on far more of a militarist approach rather than an immersive, realistic feel you would find in say Douglas Jackson's Claudius or others written about the same event. The battle scenes flow more like the kind of reconstructed scenes you see on television documentaries analysing the tactics rather than something that makes your head swim with the blood and gore of it all. Again, I could put to a number of other Roman fiction authors whose battle scenes work so much better. The saving grace of those battles is that at least it's the few times that you actually care about the lead character, Vespasian.

The Vespasian of this book, and indeed series as it has gone on, seems to give more and more impression of being a one-dimensional ineffectual person who you neither love, hate nor particular feel any closer to understanding what motivates him four books in than at a point in the arc three books earlier. At times I found myself wishing that I could transplant the Vespasian of at least a couple of other author's series' into this story just to give it a bit of a kick in the veins.

While I make no claims to being any sort of knowledgeable enthusiast or expert on the historical accuracy of the times, it also jarred a little with the seeming suggestion that the Britons had their own form of cavalry which fought on horseback when it seems to be common agreement that the Britons only used horses to travel to the battlefield or pull war chariots not actually in the cavalry manner. Though if someone could

prove me wrong on that front I'll happily amend this part of the review.

The language is a little coarse at times in a kind of ham-fisted attempt at mirroring a Roman soldier's personality with that of a modern soldier. The intended effect is kind of lost though as it's done in a way that inadvertently makes the characters seem more petulant and stropy than just swearing because it comes naturally.

For instance, Anthony Riches' Roman books have some choice swear words and profanities in them at times but they actually serve a dramatic purpose and add to the narrative, whereas their use in this book just comes across as a bit of an afterthought or shortcut to more blunt dialogue.

Overall, if the titular character were made to be at least slightly less monochrome or the quality of the first third had carried right the way through the book, I'd be singing this novel's praises to anyone that would listen to me. As it stands, it's somewhat underwhelming and more filler than killer; another book to add to the pile of fiction written about the Roman conquest of Britain, making up the numbers.

If you're new to the series, or happen to be interested in a novel specifically about the conquest of Britain, at this moment in time I'd direct you more towards Douglas Jackson's Caligula for a far more realistic, practically tangible & immersive read. This is more of a placeholder than sterling installment in a series.

Peter says

Vivid descriptions, as with its predecessor Tribune of Rome, mark this fourth in the series on Vespasian which starts with Caligula's assassination and then takes Vespasian to the Rhine to recover one of Varus' lost Eagles and finally to the invasion of Britain with Roman political duplicity following him all the way. The battle descriptions and detail of the landscapes are superbly done; characters are fully fleshed particularly Plautius, the leader of the invasion, although dialogue is a little too 21st century. All totally engrossing.

Paul Bennett says

Caligula lies dead by the hands of assassins. Claudius, the drooling fool is proclaimed Emperor but his rule will be a short one unless he wins over the legions. To do that his three conniving freedmen, Narcissus, Pallas and Callistus, concoct a scheme of breath taking magnitude. Thus we find Vespasian and his brother Sabinus on a seemingly impossible mission to find and return the lost Eagle of the 17th Legion; lost 30 years prior in the Teutoburg Forest massacre. What follows is a masterful story of danger, excitement and unrelenting action coupled with the snake-oil, behind the scenes plotting of the powers behind Claudius; not only of his freedmen but of his devious wife Messalina. Mr. Fabbri has created a compelling tale of Vespasian and his ever increasing belief in himself and his destiny. His leadership qualities and his abilities as a warrior come to the fore in this volume of what is a great series of books. From the vast and dark forests of Germania to the savage battles fought for Claudius' benefit in Britain, Rome's Fallen Eagle takes the reader on a splendid ride indeed. 5 stars

Rebecca says

Fourth part of the series, Vespasian is trying to navigate the seemingly endless plots of imperial Rome.

Caligula was a debauched mess, so they get rid of him in the hope Claudius will do better, although many Romans don't like the idea of a disabled emperor as they fear it will make them look weak.

Vespasian is commanded to recover a legionary standard lost in Varus's infamous defeat in Germany - but fears he's being stitched up. The three freedmen who seek to control Claudius all have agendas of their own - and their infighting threatens to prevent the legions from being able to fulfill their roles. Sometimes, as a reader, I wanted to reach into the book and knock their heads together. None of them seem to have been capable of seeing the damage their in-fighting was doing. Ultimately, people like them destabilised the Empire through their own selfishness. It's a miracle it held together as long as it did!

It's a decent read, despite some of the characters being annoying. Given that most of them are historically attested to have existed, it can't really be helped - the author is just portraying them as he believes they were. You do ideally need to have read the previous parts of the series to understand some of the references though - and there are times when the now-customary explanatory conversations threaten to become info-dumps.

The historical notes are also interesting regarding the later part of the book (view spoiler)

Now I just have to find part V.

Mr. Matt says

With Caligula assassinated by a cabal of Senators and Praetorians, the despised Greek freedman Narcissus places the crippled Claudius on the seat of power. Fortunately for Narcissus and his allies, the Praetorian Guard is quick to back Claudius. They understand that their own power and privilege comes from having an Emperor - and what is better than a weak willed, very pliable Emperor? Of course, the Empire is more than the Senate and the city. Will the far flung legions rally to the new, less than beloved Emperor? Narcissus needs a victory - and quickly - if he is to secure Claudius' (and his own) clutch on Imperial power.

Vespasian finds himself mired in yet another bout of Imperial intrigue. Due to his brother's part in the assassination of Caligula, the two brothers are sent on a do or die mission in distant Germania to recover the lost Eagle of the massacred 17th legion. The legions' Eagles held an almost religious place in soldiers' eyes. Recovering this near holy relic would give the new Emperor a boost.

So far so good. Unfortunately, although the Eagle is recovered, Vespasian gets swept up in the pending invasion of Britannia and the Eagle is more or less dropped. The first part of the story is about the recovery of this relic. The second is about the invasion of Britannia. It felt to me as if the author was exploring a very cool idea but then realized that it didn't quite add up to a full book so he quickly shifted gears to the invasion. Why not just start with the invasion?

To be frank, the invasion of Britannia is a far more interesting thread than the quest for the Eagle. The first part of the story involved tramping through the cold, damp forest wilderness of Germania while occasionally fighting. The invasion, by contrast, was thick with Imperial intrigue. Corvinus, the senior Legate and brother-in-law to Claudius, is trying to use the invasion to enhance his own position. If he were to be seen as the conqueror of Britain, no one would object when he became regent to his young nephew should Claudius die unexpectedly. And, if the young Emperor then passed away, who better to be an Emperor than a proven warrior? Vespasian and Narcissus, aware of Corvinus' ambitions, have no choice but to maneuver and twist to thwart him.

If this sounds overly negative it is not meant to. The book was still good and fun. Vespasian continues to

develop and grow. You can see the future Emperor learning lessons about leadership, decisiveness and politics in the series. In this book you can also see the first stirrings of ambition. He may not come from a great Patrician family, but in the absence of truly legitimate candidates is that necessarily a liability?

III stars out of V. The book could use some focus. Too much Germania, not enough Britannia.

David Stringer says

This is book number 4 in the Vespasian series written by Robert Fabbri, where again we continue to see the developing and character building of the future emperor Vespasian. In this instalment I'm glad to say we see an end to the Emperor Caligula, who from the previous book was causing quite a lot of mayhem and performing deplorable acts that was a little tough to digest and read at times. Perhaps I'm getting soft in my old age.

In this instalment we see our hero help the, almost feeble new emperor Claudius, score points with the Rome public by retrieving the long lost Seventeenth's Eagle and then this is followed up by the invasion of Britain.

Maybe because I don't normally read so many books by one author in a series on the bounce like I've just done with this/these one's, but found by interest levels slipped a little in this book, especially the second half of the book and in particular the battle scenes, think I enjoyed the political back stabbing's of the previous books to these, but that's more than likely just me.

Anyway, three stars, and think I'm now taking a break from Vespasian and give something else a read.
