



Spartacus: Rebellion

Ben Kane

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The mighty slave army, led by Spartacus, has carried all before it, scattering the legions of Rome. Three praetors, two consuls and one proconsul have been defeated. Spartacus seems invincible as he marches towards the Alps and freedom.

But storm clouds are massing on the horizon. Crixus the Gaul defects, taking all his men with him. Crassus, the richest man in Rome, begins to raise a formidable army, tasked specifically with the defeat of Spartacus. And within the slave army itself, there are murmurings of dissent and rebellion.

Spartacus, on the brink of glory, must make a crucial decision - to go forward over the Alps to freedom, or back to face the might of Rome and try to break its stranglehold on power forever.

Spartacus: Rebellion Details

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Mr. Matt says

The second volume of Ben Kane's Spartacus series was a much, much better book. It was so much better that I wonder why we had to wade through the first book to get to the second. I get it; volume one is about setting the stage and introducing the characters and volume two is where the you-know-what hits the fan. Only I'm not sure.

The first book felt very rigid and formulaic to me. The struggle with historical fiction is that the ultimate outcome is never in doubt. Reading about Spartacus, the facts are all well known. Just from watching the movie with Kirk Douglas we know that he was a gladiator who led a failed slave rebellion against Rome. We know that he and his followers also wind up crucified along the Appian Way from Capua to Rome.

Where historical fiction is at its best is by telling you the hidden details that made that journey possible - unless the main characters did X then the Y of recorded history never would have happened. This was the failing of the first book. It felt as if I was at a theme-park riding the ride that had been prepared for me - one that I was already familiar with. Book one was a dry recounting of Spartacus' early, successful days. (Book one would have been more interesting focusing on his escape from the ludus, I think..... the untold story of how he and 70-some gladiators escaped).

The second book was more intriguing because this is where it all started to go wrong. And we're not exactly sure why it did all go wrong. It was a hundred little things that began to fail - not any single big event. Crassus (who finally comes into his own as a more fleshed out character) organizes a new Roman army to crush the slaves. The slaves make it to the Alps only to turn around again. The failed assassination attempt on Crassus. Spartacus tries to bargain with pirates to launch a failed invasion of Sicily. His Gaulish co-generals abandon him. His relationship with his wife suffers. The steady stream of run-away slaves dries up. This was much more fun. I was on the author's rails, but I was seeing new stuff. I didn't mind the ride at all. The whole thing felt much more natural and fluid to me.

For whatever reason I enjoyed this book much more so than it's first volume. A solid four stars. It would have been better if the author could have found a way to somehow consolidate the two books together, but that's okay.

Claire O'Sullivan says

Read as a work Bookgroup read. Not to my taste particularly but well written and great to read on the cross trainer . The battle scenes took minutes off my 10K !

Paolo Calabrò says

A lot better than its predecessor, but still bad. Very bad.

Inaccuracies abound, both historical and linguistic (come on, you can't use 21st century expressions in a book set 22 centuries ago and still hope to be taken seriously).

Like in the previous book, there's still the problem of rape and cold-blooded murder being either downplayed or condoned in a confusing manner, although thankfully we see it much less frequently.

I read it only so I could say that I finished the series, and now I know for certain that I won't be picking up another book by Ben Kane any time soon.

Kate says

After reading Ben Kane's first Spartacus novel, I couldn't read its follow up Rebellion fast enough. I think for most of it my heart was in my mouth. The fact that we all must know the final fate of Spartacus and his revolt doesn't make its depiction any less powerful and poignant. Spartacus is far more complicated here than I was expecting and not necessarily likeable. He's also not on his own - we learn much more about other familiar characters such as Ariadne and Carbo, plus the Romans building their forces against an enemy they regard as subhuman. Ben Kane's research is meticulous and he presents his knowledge at a pace and with a heart. This novel presents a terrific conclusion to the series and I can't recommend it enough.

Cheryl says

I had just recently finished watching Spartacus on Starz when I picked up a copy of Spartacus: Rebellion to read. I have not read the first book but you don't have to have read the first one to thoroughly enjoy this one.

I really was pleased to read this book because of having just finishing watching Spartacus. I was still craving my Spartacus fix. Mr. Kane satisfied it for me with this book. It is easy to see and experience Mr. Kane's love for military history. He writes with such passion. I thought that he did a good job of portraying Spartacus's last part of his life as he and his rebels fought against Marcus Crassus and Caesar.

If you are familiar with Spartacus then you are aware that there is blood and guts and foul language. This is just the way that things happened...war is ugly. This is what I liked about this book. Mr. Kane does not stray away from any of this which really makes this book feel realistic like I was there fighting along side Spartacus and his men.

Dan says

Rebellion starts off where the previous finished. Spartacus heads his massive slave army and backed by a solid supporting cast: Ariadne, his wife and priestess of Dionysus; Carbo and Navio, Romans who find Spartacus' allure too irresistible and they have serious issues of revenge with Rome; bodyguards Taxicas and Atheas; and his remaining two Gaulish generals Castus and Gannicus.

His third general, Crixus, has left the army and is slaughtered by Rome's legions. News of this defeat reaches Spartacus in a grisly manner, and he uses this to convince Castus and Gannicus to remain with him for the time being. In the meantime, the two Gauls are plotting to kill Spartacus and take over the army, or to leave it all together and seek their fate on their own.

Rome is in turmoil about Spartacus' army and it will no longer tolerate defeat. Like a hydra, cut off one head two will replace it, is like the legions. One is defeated and two replace it. More legions are sent out to defeat

Spartacus and a clever trap is laid. However, Carbo and Navio are sent on a mission to find information about the new army and they discover the plans (a very humorous scene here). The legions are defeated again and the richest man in Rome, Crassus, is elected to take charge of the army.

Crassus is just as cunning and brutal as Spartacus. He traps Spartacus in the heel of Italy as they attempt to flee to Sicily. But a spy has been planted in the slave army and every move made by Spartacus is known by Crassus and his legions. Stuck in a difficult position, Spartacus must make decisions knowing ten legions await his army with more on the way, attempted assassinations, a spy, a new-born son, and two of his strongest yet stubborn leaders wanting to leave the army.

Rebellion is a fast-paced book with lots of adrenaline pumping scenes. Author Ben Kane continues to develop his characters on both sides which gives the book excellent depth. A must-read for anyone interested in history or fans of action/historical fiction novels.

adam-p-reviews says

Spartacus: Rebellion is the sequel to Ben Kane's Spartacus: The Gladiator and picks up the story straight after the end of that book. It sees Spartacus's slave army divided. His biggest competitor for control of the army; Crixus the Gaul, has left with his fighters, leaving Spartacus severely crippled because much of his fighting force has been removed. To make things even worse, Crixus is beaten and killed in his first battle against the Romans, meaning that the Roman forces in Italy can now focus on removing and destroying Spartacus's men!

But, there is still a chance to escape Italy forever. As Ariadne's prophecy said, Spartacus should head East out of Italy and into his homeland of Thrace. However, getting his army to follow him will be tough! The men are content with pillaging Rome; after all it was the Romans who enslaved them, why should they not get some revenge? Also, under Spartacus's rule the slave army has never been defeated, who's to say they couldn't go on and beat every army sent against them or even sack Rome itself? These are the problems Spartacus faces with his men. Plus the other two clan leaders in the army Callus and Gannicus have plans of their own. Both want to remove Spartacus as the leader of the army; he is becoming too powerful and arrogant, leaving them out of important decisions, sending out spies without telling them and leading the battle without asking for their advice! It is time they took control of the army and marched on Rome themselves like their ancestors did. But they must wait for the right time to remove Spartacus, his wife and his loyal followers before they can usurp control.

Meanwhile, the Senate is in disarray! Every force sent to deal with Spartacus has been defeated! It is no longer just a slave rabble that is running around the countryside but a full scale Rebellion! One Senator, Crassus, feels like he is the man who can hunt down Spartacus and defeat him. After all, he is the richest man in Rome and can put any resource at his disposal, but this is not the reason why he thinks he can beat Spartacus, but because he knows him.

All those years ago in the Ludus of Capua, Crassus would never have expected the Gladiator who had won the death bout put on for him to be heard of again. Yes, the Thracian was spirited and a good fighter but his destiny was to die in the sands of a Colosseum! Not to become the leader of the biggest threat to Roman security since Hannibal! Crassus knows he has greatness in him and that he is not just a rich merchant but a leader of men. He knows that if he can outmanoeuvre and defeat Spartacus he will have achieved that greatness!

What will Spartacus do? With Crassus biting at his heels will he be able to persuade his soldiers to leave

Italy forever and fight new wars in foreign lands? Or will he turn south, confront Crassus and come up with a new plan to escape Italy?

This was another great book from Ben Kane. Like *Spartacus: The Gladiator* it was filled with action, battles, love and betrayal. It was really fast paced; I read it in only a few days! But to be fair, I expect these sorts of things from Ben's novels. What I found really surprising about this book and what I really liked about it was how Ben develops the two main characters, Spartacus and Carbo. In *Spartacus: The Gladiator* I always saw Spartacus as the unlikely hero that I love to read about in historical fiction. He was a slave, exiled from his Kingdom and training to become a Gladiator, the lowest of the low in Roman society. Yet, he had a brilliant tactical mind which managed to free him from the Ludus and which eventually made him the leader of the slave rebellion. Whereas in *Spartacus: Rebellion*, Kane evolves him into the general, a leader of men who puts his soldiers before his family and his friends. This sees Spartacus make decisions that he might not have made when he was in the Ludus. There are times when we see glimpses of the old Spartacus but mostly he is cold and hard. Which I thought was great because he would change as a person because of the pressures put on him in command.

On the other hand, in *Spartacus: The Gladiator* Carbo is the one who should have been a leader. He was from a wealthy Roman family and was young and arrogant. It should have been him leading a brigade of Cavalry in the Roman army and not some Gladiator fighting for his life! However when he enters the Ludus he is humbled and in *Spartacus: Rebellion* he becomes the follower, always looking to protect Spartacus and receive his praise. Again I think Kane did a great job evolving Carbo into this role.

So there you go, this was my sneak peak/ preview of Ben Kane's *Spartacus: Rebellion*, I hope you enjoyed it! I would suggest this book to anyone who is a fan of Roman fictional writers such as Simon Scarrow, Conn Iggulden and Anthony Riches. Of course if you read *Spartacus: The Gladiator* and enjoyed it then you should definitely read this book!

For more great book reviews check out <http://adam-p-reviews.blogspot.co.uk/>

Aviones de papel says

Es una novela histórica realmente brillante, me ha gustado incluso más que la primera parte, y eso que me maravilló. La forma de escribir de Ben Kane es excelente, es una lectura muy ligera que da la impresión de que sea fácil, pero a la vez es extremadamente detallista, real y cruda, es algo sobresaliente. Los personajes son brutales, sobre todo Espartaco, es un personaje con muchísimos matices, muy realista y profundo, Carbo, Craso y Ariadne también me han encantado. Aventuras, acción, sangre, historia, para todos los que os gusten este tipo de cosas no deberíais perderos esta duología. El remate que hace el autor comparando su novela con los hechos históricos es algo precioso. Me encantaría volver a leer a este escritor.

S.J.A. Turney says

No.... I'M Spartacus

I've waited until I finished the second book to review these two, since I read them back to back and a 2-part series is relatively rare. Given that, I will not be writing a separate review for each book. This review is for both *Spartacus the Gladiator* and *Spartacus: Rebellion*.

I've been a fan of Ben's writing from the start. His *Forgotten Legion* series was groundbreaking in a number of ways and quite astounding as a debut. I was then fairly stunned by *Hannibal*, which I consider to be one of the finest pieces of ancient Historical fiction written. Despite the high quality of FL, *Hannibal* showed a new maturity in writing and more depth of character and soul.

So on to *Spartacus*. I won't say, for the record, that this series is better than Ben's *Hannibal* (and its future sequels.) It is as good as *Hannibal*, and that's just dandy by me. I wouldn't have wanted Ben's style to change after *Hannibal*, as that book hit the spot just right for me. What I will say about these books is that there has been a slight change in conventions that I found refreshing and excellent (more of that shortly).

I won't say much about the plot, to be honest. Anyone who follows any review I write knows that I don't like to risk spoilers. But, that being said, the general tale of *Spartacus* is a matter of record that most people will have at least a basic knowledge of. So, bear in mind that you sort of know how this saga is going to end. I mean, there's only a certain amount of license a writer can realistically get away with (and Ben Kane seems to be very sparing with artistic license anyway) and to have the books end with *Spartacus* riding off into the sunset would be a little hard to swallow.

So prepare yourself. I spoke to Ben at the History In the Court event a few days ago and he wondered whether I'd cry at the end, given that apparently a lot of others had. Well, Ben, I have to admit to a few sneaky tears there, but to be honest there had been eye moistening for at least two chapters in anticipation...

One thing I find I have to say and it's the only thing that could be construed as criticism, I suspect, is that in both books, I actually wished they were slightly longer, despite that they were long anyway! The reasoning behind this is that the time spent in the ludus at Capua has some of the most important plot buildup of the whole story, but I felt that I would have liked to see more of the non-plot-important gladiatorial contests during that time (some are reminisced about or alluded to that I'd have liked to have read directly.) It is possible, of course, that this is my own problem fuelled by having recently watched the *Spartacus* series and craving such fights – bear in mind that it's almost impossible to read *Spartacus* without drawing certain comparisons if you've watched the series, but I'm confident these books will come out of the comparison favourably. Similarly, in the second book, a number of the smaller battles or skirmishes that are not critical are referenced only in reminiscence or conversation, and I kind of missed seeing them myself. Again, perhaps just my bloodthirsty tendencies showing through.

But on with reviewing: One thing that I particularly loved that was, if memory serves me correctly, a new convention in Ben's writing, is the regular inclusion of an 'inner dialogue' for the major characters. At first I wasn't sure how I felt about this, but as the books progressed, I decided I really liked it and loved the effect it had on conversation. Often two characters will converse, but their private thoughts have a secondary conversation above them. This really gives a boost to the understanding of the motives and desires of the characters.

Another big win for me was the character of Carbo. Clearly a fictional creation, Carbo is the Yin to *Spartacus*'s Yang in many ways and provides a counterpoint to the main star. I will say that he is in no way a sidekick or comedy relief. He is a strong protagonist in his own right, but helps to balance *Spartacus*. Well done for Carbo, Ben. Not only is he an important character, a plot foil, a companion and so much more, he is also the main chance the book has for any sort of positivity in the outcome.

Similarly, I loved Navio, and the portrayal of the young Caesar. On the Roman side, it is interesting to see Caesar and Crassus at this stage in their development, giving an insight into what creates the men who will exist and are portrayed in the *Forgotten Legion*.

Incidentally, as well as the sadness of the inevitable conclusion, there is one scene in the first book (a death scene) that I actually found worse. It was for me a harrowing read with all the soul-crushing skill of a Guy Gavriel Kay work. Fabulous in its awfulness.

In an echo of the plot construction of the Forgotten Legion, there is an overriding element of the mystical and the divine in this work which goes deeper than simply describing the attitudes of the people in the setting, but actually provides foretellings, insights, and even explanations as to the reasons for the events of the Third Servile War. One day I may well go back through these books and read them with a different mindset, going in to them with the idea that the whole string of events is somewhat defined and informed by prophecy and divine whim, rather than the straight historical viewpoint I attacked them with this time.

All in all, these two books create the deepest, most realistic and yet refreshingly different telling of the Spartacus rebellion yet. Forget Blood and Sand and Kirk Douglas. The characters here are authentic feeling and very much sympathetic, even on the Roman side. The fights and battles are up to the very high standard that fans of Ben Kane's work will have come to expect. The undertones of divine influence are subtle and yet powerful. As always, Ben appears to have meticulously researched everything and the historical accuracy of the books is as strong as I can believe it could get. There is never a let up in the story's pace or the action, and you will genuinely be as sad at the conclusion that you have no more to read as you are at the storyline itself.

It's a win on many levels. It's so sad that there's nowhere to go and the series has to end there. There could always be the possibility of a prequel, of course, since sequels are unrealistic. But anyone who watches Ben on twitter will be able to heave a sigh of relief knowing that he's working on the next Hannibal book now.

Caperer says

9/10

Sensitivemuse says

I wish this series would go on and on, but well that just would not be possible nor historically accurate right? (unless!!! you could go on with Carbo's story!?! please? pretty please?) now the previous book (Spartacus: Gladiator) had all the action and battle scenes. This one has battle scenes times two. EPIC battle scenes. Well written battle scenes that you feel like this should be played out as a movie just to see how it looks like.

The plot of the book is well done like the last one (I do recommend you read Spartacus: Gladiator before jumping into this one). There's slightly less intrigue, way more action and fighting, and a lot more memorable quotes to read. I'd say the best part would be Carbo's mission with Navio (love those two secondary characters not only did they provide some comic relief but seeing Carbo develop character wise was excellent to follow through in the book).

The last and final battle scene was definitely worth reading and I like how it was through Carbo's perspective. I felt a bit cheated that Carbo didn't get what he wanted in the end, but I suppose it's to make it as historically accurate as possible. The author's note in the end provided a lot of information and the glossary in the back as helps as well because there's plenty of terminology that was new to me (I'm not well versed in Roman history).

I really wish this could go on in Carbo's point of view, his story was going towards something with lots of potential and it sounded so interesting. Otherwise, the book was well worth the read. Definitely recommended for history buffs and Roman history lovers out there.

Jonathan says

If I was a different kind of reader, I think I could happily just read historical novels if they were anywhere near as good as Ben Kane's Spartacus series. Both books give a totally immersive reading experience, through plot, style, historical detail and pure excitement. As it is I like too many types of book to stick to one genre, but to anyone who disregards this adventuresome type of historical novel, I would say at least give it a go, and maybe you'll discover something new.

Patty says

This is a worthy sequel to Spartacus: The Gladiator. I thoroughly enjoyed that first book in this series and it concludes as it must in Spartacus: Rebellion. Despite knowing exactly what would happen I found myself turning the pages hoping that it would turn out better for Spartacus and his band of slaves/warriors. Mr. Kane's writing had me so involved in their tale I had completely forgotten the history I knew - or perhaps having Spartacus brought to such vivid life made me want to stay alive.

This is, be warned, a book of war and war is never easy to wage or read. The Romans were not known for their erm, kindness to those they vanquished and Spartacus gave as good as the Romans that enslaved him. So be forewarned - there is a bit of blood, guts, gore and downright ick in this book but it is never exploitative or misplaced. War IS hell.

Mr. Kane uses what little history left to us about Spartacus and he leaves his reader with a fleshed out story of very real possibilities - he posits that Caesar might have been a mitigating factor in Spartacus's loss. After all Caesar was one of the greatest generals and tacticians to come out of that era. He provides educated suggestions as to the unanswered questions to some of Spartacus's more unexplained moves. All very plausible given the times and the actions of others. All making for a book that was very, very hard to put down.

I LOVE Roman history. It's second for me after the Tudor period and I've read any number of books taking place in this time period. Mr. Kane re-creates that world - violent as it may be - as well as any other author I have read. He is one of those authors who leave me having a hard time coming back into reality after having been living in the world he creates with his words. I thank him for that because I love nothing more than getting lost in a book.

Arminius says

There were only a handful of men who put fear into the hearts of Rome at its peak. His name was Spartacus. Spartacus was a captured man from the city of Thrace that was chosen as a gladiator to fight other gladiators to the death purely to entertain the Roman public. Gladiators were trained by Roman owners who bought groups of men to fight in these events. They trained before they fought in a gladiatorial contest with wooden weapons to prevent injury. Spartacus proved as the best gladiator in Lentulus Batiatus's camp. After defeating many gladiators thus making riches for Bariatatus, Spartacus planned a rebellion with fellow gladiators. He led an attack, killed Batiatus and therefore escaped imprisonment with fellow gladiators.

The band of gladiators led by Spartacus attacked cities where they freed slaves. The slaves joined their ragtime army. Rome sent its army after the Spartacus's outlaws but was defeated 11 times. Finally, Crassus, the richest man in Rome, raised an army to pursue Spartacus.

Spartacus wanted his band of misfits to cross the Alps and disperse into freedom. However, they were confident after all their victories and felt Spartacus was blessed to win victory after victory. So Spartacus relented and led the legions of followers down to the boot of Italy. There he contacted Pirates and paid them to use their boats to sail to Sicily. In Sicily he felt he could get their grain for food plus free the huge slave population. Unfortunately, though the Pirates were caught by the Romans and therefore never showed up.

Crassus knew where Spartacus was so he dug a ditch across the whole of Italy in order to trap Spartacus and his army. Spartacus, however, was not only tough he was a genius as well. He figured out that a ridge along the ditches were his best way to escape. When he tried to break it at the ridge the Romans were ready and the bombarded the slaves and gladiators until Spartacus had to retreat. However, the next morning Spartacus tried again and surprised Romans therefore breaking through the Roman line and escaping the entrapment. In his heart, he knew he was never going to beat the great Roman Army. Crassus had 8 legions plus Pompey the Great was returning to Rome after yet another round of sensational victories in the Third Mithridatic War and Hispania.

Spartacus's plan was to get to Crassus and kill him. Once he was dead the Roman legions would be leaderless and degrade into confusion. This was the only chance he had to win this battle. In the brutal battle Spartacus reached Crassus but was speared numerous times by a group of Roman soldiers and finally killed. His body was taken by his men because the Romans never found it. Those of Spartacus's army, some 6000, who survived were crucified along the Appian Way leading into Rome itself.

Spartacus was dead but he lived on as an example of oppressed people not standing for their oppressed status.

Erin says

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I rarely find Ancient Roman fiction that falls in the grey. I mean I either fall completely in love with it or absolutely despise it. Funny thing is it really comes down to the author and whether or not they can make me believe their perception of the ancient world.

In picking up Spartacus: Rebellion, I knew I needed to hear the roar of battle in my mind, see the grit, sweat and blood of each warrior on the field, feel the desperation and conviction amid the violence and savagery of war. If I'd had any experience with Kane's work I would have known going in he would meet every one of these expectations, but as a first time reader, really, I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

Now, I don't want to give the impression that the book is all blood and gore as that would be an egregious misrepresentation. I needed those scenes to work, but I loved how Kane balanced them against the politics of it all. His incarnation of Spartacus is prone to human faults, acting in arrogant self-importance and in so doing, undermining his own authority. It is a very dynamic portrait of the gladiator which is quite an achievement when one considers how little Kane had to work with historically.

If anything, I wish I'd read the first installment before taking on the sequel. You can enjoy Spartacus: Rebellion as a stand alone, but I think I might have appreciated it more if I had a better grasp of the larger scope of Kane's story.

Still, Spartacus: Rebellion is a realistic and remarkably well-researched fiction by a truly gifted storyteller. A definite must-read for anyone interested in the gladiator or his achievements.
