

WARRIORS

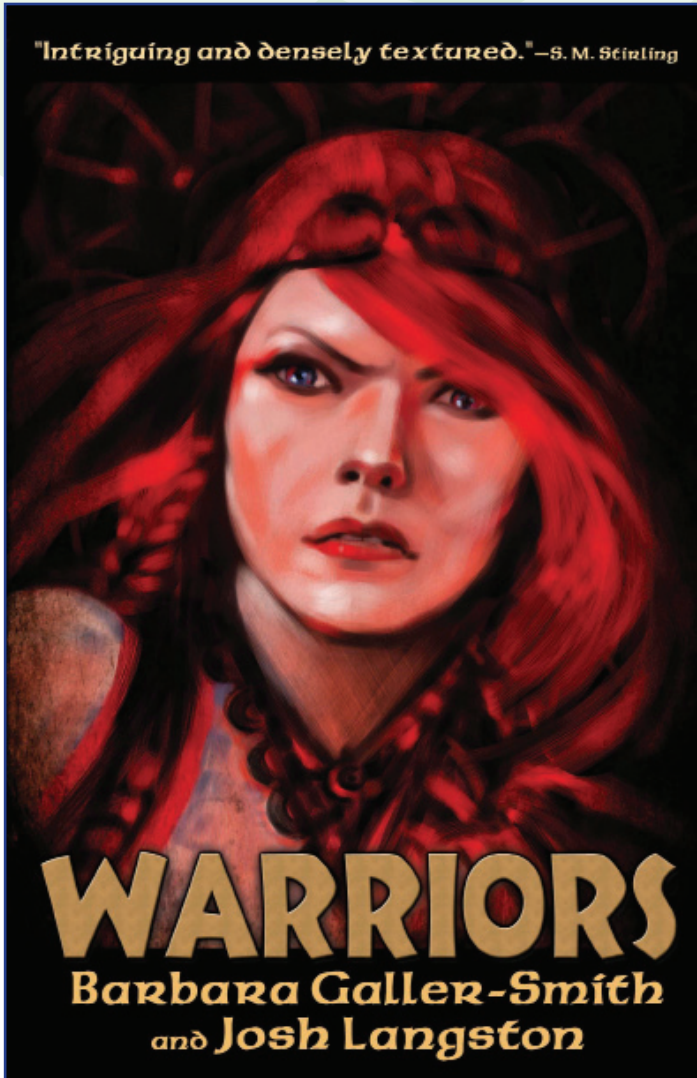
by Barbara Galler-Smith and Josh Langston

About the Novel

Gaul is the centerpiece of Julius Caesar's campaign to rule the world, and only the Celtic tribes stand in his way. Though the warrior bands outnumber Caesar's legions, they lack leadership and organization. Caesar sends tax collectors at the head of his armies. Some in Gaul pay for this "protection," but for many, the only choice Caesar offers is slavery or death.

Those clans which reject the demands of the conquest-hungry Roman will face Caesar's legions. Both men and women shall become warriors.

As if facing the Romans weren't difficult enough, these warriors must also face many of their own kind, often building alliances on foundations of enmity and mistrust. But even amidst such hostile intrigues and fierce conflict, these same combatants find time for tender passions, too. War is as much a part of life as laughter; danger is as common as celebration. *Warriors* tells their stories, examines their hopes and fears, and recalls a time when the barbarian version of civilization was actually more "civil" than Rome's. History may indeed be written by the victors, but that doesn't mean the vanquished don't also have wonderful tales to tell.



(FINAL BOOK OF THE DRUIDS TRILOGY)

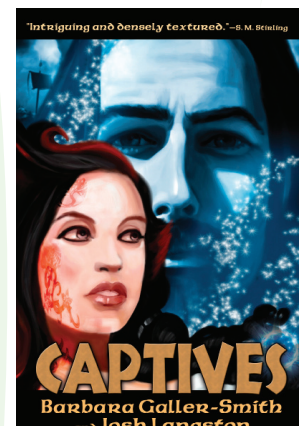
The Authors

Author Barb Galler-Smith is a member of Edmonton's Cult of Pain writers group, mentors a group of emerging writers called "the Scruffies" and is an editor for OnSpec magazine.

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Book One



Book Two

WARRIORS

(FINAL BOOK IN THE DRUIDS TRILOGY)

Chapter One

Crows. Arienne shivered at the envoys of evil and crossed herself with the sign of the Goddess when they flew over the rampart she guarded. *So many!* As they spread out to feed amid the tender spring grasses of the commons, Arienne pulled a sling from her belt and slipped a smooth river stone into the supple leather pouch. She liked the feel of the weapon dangling from her hand as she judged which of the birds would make the best target. No one in the village would miss them or their baneful influence.

Before she could begin her windup, her uncle climbed the ladder to the catwalk. He towered over her, his giant stature and dark features made all the more striking by his soft voice and easy manner. "I'll wager a meal you miss."

Arienne looked up at him and laughed. "One of your meals, Uncle Vertimus, or mine? I want to know how long I'll go hungry if I lose."

"You don't sound very confident."

"Confidence and knowledge are different sides of the same coin," she said, quoting her teacher, Driad Rhonwen. "Besides, if you think I lack the skill, you should be willing to bet more than just a meal."

Vertimus crossed his arms and leaned back against the wall. He nodded toward the crows. "Send one of them through the Cauldron and I'll stand a night watch for you. Fair enough?"

"Aye." She grinned. "No trickery now."

Vertimus made a great show of sitting on his hands and looking at the sky.

Arienne whirled the sling over her head and let the stone fly. It hit the nearest crow and sent the bird screeching sideways with one leg crushed and its feathers splayed. The other crows took flight while their injured companion flopped around in the grass.

Vertimus raised an eyebrow.

Arienne exhaled heavily and started to climb down from the wall.

"Finish it from here," he said, "or can't you hit a moving target?"

In a single fluid motion, she stepped to the wall, whipped a stone into the leather sling, and sent it hurtling toward the crow. The missile bounced harmlessly two paces wide of the mark.

"Best three out of four?"

She grumbled and placed a third stone in her sling. Concentrating, she let it fly this stone landing more solidly than the first. The crow collapsed and lay still as a few black feathers floated slowly to the ground.

Continued...



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