

BOUDICCA - Episode 1

by John Tuckey

BOUDICCA

When I was younger, the Romans treated us like equals. Now, they treat us like slaves! They steal our land, our goods, they kill. We have all suffered at their hands. Now is the time to take our revenge!

NARRATOR

Imagine it's nearly 2000 years ago. What you're going to hear is based on Roman writings of that time. And that voice you just heard? It was a woman called Boudicca, standing tall and strong in her chariot before a huge army. Boudicca was queen of a tribe called the Iceni who lived in the part of Britain we now call Norfolk. And she had gathered this army to fight the Romans.

The Romans invaded Britain in 43AD. At first the Romans and the Iceni lived peacefully together, but that was all to change. It's early morning and an important Roman official arrives at the home of the Iceni...

ANTONINUS

My name is Antoninus. I am here to speak to the king.

BOUDICCA

You are welcome. But the king is not here. You'll need to speak to me. I am Boudicca, the queen.

BOUDICCA

It may not be the Roman custom to speak to a woman about important matters, but it is our custom. What is your business here?

ANTONINUS

I've been sent by the Emperor to tell you that he wants to live in peace with the Iceni.

BOUDICCA

And we want to live in peace with the Romans.

ANTONINUS

But we need the Iceni to pay tax. We've brought order to the country. It's only right that every tribe pays for order and peace.



History Clips: The Romans

- BOUDICCA Go on.
- ANTONINUS Do you agree?
- BOUDICCA I need to know how much you're asking for before I can agree or disagree. And then I'll need to discuss it with the king and our advisors.
- ANTONINUS Yes, that's fair.
- NARRATOR Each year the Iceni paid the Romans a sum of money and in return the Romans respected the Iceni ways. Then, the king of the Iceni, Boudicca's husband, died. He was called Prasutagus. Many leaders of other tribes came to his funeral, including the leader of a neighbouring tribe called the Trinovantes.
- BOUDICCA Addedo - it's good of you to come.
- ADDEDO Prasutagus was a fine man, Boudicca.
- BOUDICCA Thank you. Yes, we'll miss him.
- ADDEDO But, Boudicca, how are you going to protect your people from the Romans, now he's dead?
- BOUDICCA Prasutagus took care of that before he died. He was a wealthy man. He made a will, leaving half of his land and treasure to the Roman Emperor, so the Romans will leave us in peace.
- ADDEDO And you believe they will?
- BOUDICCA Yes, I do.
- ADDEDO No, Boudicca. You can't believe a word the Romans say.
- BOUDICCA They've been all right to us.



- ADDED0 Boudicca, just last week Roman soldiers came from Camulodunum. It used to be our capital city - now it's theirs. They built a huge fort there. Soldiers roamed all over our land, stealing animals, and killing whoever was looking after them.
- BOUDICCA Why did they do that?
- ADDED0 To terrify us, to keep us down. They didn't care who it was, men, women, even children.
- BOUDICCA That's terrible. We must protect our people, our families, but...
- ADDED0 We used to be a powerful tribe in Britain, like the Iceni. But, Boudicca, you should see us now. We're slaves to these Romans. They steal, they cheat, they kill.
- NARRATOR We can't be sure why the Romans started attacking the Trinvantes – but one thing we *do* know: the person who commanded the Roman soldiers, the Governor of Roman Britain, had marched to North Wales with his army to attack the people who lived there. Many of these were druids - powerful religious leaders for many British Celts - and the Roman Governor was called Gaius Suetonius Paulinus...
- SUETONIUS Antoninus!
- ANTONINUS Sir?
- SUETONIUS Why aren't our soldiers attacking? They're not scared of that rag-tag army, are they? Men, women...druids...
- ANTONINUS The soldiers - they're scared of the power of the druids.
- SUETONIUS A Roman army, *my* army, is scared of druids?
- ANTONINUS The soldiers fear what the druids might be able to do to them.



History Clips: The Romans

- SUETONIUS That's why we're going to destroy them. Destroy the druids and we'll break the spirit of the people on this island.
- ANTONINUS The soldiers have never seen anything like this before, sir.
- SUETONIUS Neither have I, Antoninus, neither have you! Just go and tell the men that Suetonius orders them to attack. If we get rid of these druids, we'll have the whole of this island under proper control. Under proper control!
- NARRATOR Back in Boudicca's part of Britain, Romans soldiers are starting to behave towards the Iceni in the same way they have treated the Trinovantes...
- CENTURION Soldier - bring that stuff over here, put it on the carts.
- ROMAN SOLDIER Sir! What do you want us to do with the animals, sir?
- CENTURION You mean the sheep or the Iceni people?
- ROMAN SOLDIER Ha!
- CENTURION We'll take the animals away as well.
- CENTURION You've got some good stuff there.
- ROMAN SOLDIER Yes, sir. Rich people, these Iceni.
- CENTURION You mean they were rich.
- NARRATOR Queen Boudicca can't stand by as the Roman soldiers attack her people and steal their possessions...
- BOUDICCA Centurion! Centurion! What do you think you're doing?
- CENTURION And you are?



- BOUDICCA Boudicca, Queen of the Iceni. We have an agreement with your Emperor!
- CENTURION I had no idea I was being addressed by someone so important, your majesty.
- BOUDICCA You must stop this stealing!
- CENTURION Soldier! Here – hold her - help me tie her to the cart!
- ROMAN SOLDIER Sir!
- BOUDICCA Let go of me!
- CENTURION Bring me the whip...
- ROMAN SOLDIER Yes, sir.
- BOUDICCA You're breaking an agreement with your Emperor!
- ROMAN SOLDIER The whip, sir.
- CENTURION The Emperor is a very long way away. Stand back.
- BOUDICAA No!
- NARRATOR The soldiers whipped Boudicca and the wounds left Boudicca deeply scarred. It was this pain - and the mistreatment of her family and people - that turned Boudicca into a fierce warrior. She led her own tribe - the Iceni - and she was joined by other tribes, like the Trinovantes, gathering an army to fight against the might of the Roman Empire...
- BOUDICCA We have all suffered at their hands. Now is the time to take our revenge!



History Clips: The Romans

NARRATOR

Boudicca seemed certain she could beat the Romans when she was speaking to her huge army. But now imagine her on her own, praying to Andraste, the Briton's goddess of victory...

BOUDICCA

Andraste, help me. I pray to you to give me victory in the coming battle. The Britons have been led to war by a woman before, but the Romans are so strong... I need your help. Andraste, I beg you, I beg you, give me victory.

NARRATOR

Boudicca was a very strong woman, but she knew she was taking on the powerful Roman Empire. And very few people had ever done that and won.

